

CONFLICT BETWEEN WHITES AND INDIANS ON THE LLANOS  
DE MOXOS, BENI DEPARTMENT: A CASE STUDY IN DEVELOPMENT  
FROM THE CATTLE REGIONS OF THE BOLIVIAN ORIENTE

By

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To Ignacianos and other Peasants of the Bolivian  
Oriente.

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This work is a study of the consequences for native peasants of the recent commercialization of beef cattle on the Llanos de Moxos in the Beni Department of eastern Bolivia. The writer lived as participant-observer for twenty months among the Ignacianos, a numerous native peasant group settled in and around San Ignacio de Moxos.

Like most peasants of the region, Ignacianos are descendants of Indians who were resettled in mission towns during colonial times, when for 100 years (1667-1767) the area that today corresponds roughly to the Beni Department was a Jesuit mission reserve. The Jesuits altered Amazonian social structures, introduced European tools and technologies, and

grafted a folk Catholicism onto native belief systems. The Jesuits also introduced cattle to the region and fomented a dependence on beef and dairy products. The traditional dependence on wild game and fish correspondingly waned.

After the expulsion of the Jesuits, native peoples of the Beni pampas either maintained small herds of cattle or hunted among the increasingly numerous wild herds that began to form from now untended mission cattle. This state of affairs essentially obtained until the late 1940's, when a rise in beef prices in the highland cities of Bolivia and the availability of cheap surplus United States airplanes from the war made the slaughter of Beni cattle and the immediate air transport of fresh beef to highland markets lucrative. This process of commercialization has resulted in a marked shift of control over and access to beef and dairy products from the peasant to a commercial ranching sector.

After an initial period of unchecked slaughter which reduced herd numbers to dangerously low levels, a rudimentary ranching industry began to emerge in the early 1960's and cattle numbers began to climb. There is in the area today competition between peasants and ranchers for limited high ground. Peasant gardens, made only on such forested high ground, are subject yearly to the depredations of foraging cattle that must take refuge from the flooded pampas from January through March. The Agrarian Reform of 1953, which has operated amidst a land rush since the

mid-1960's, makes little allowance for the unique physical environment of the Beni and can thus not accommodate the peasant. Moreover, rampant graft has moved Reform officials to overwhelmingly favor the ranching sector at the expense of the peasant.

Limited access to beef has now forced peasants to rely on wild game and fish to a degree unknown since early Jesuit times. But fishing is seasonal, while the commercialization of wild skins and pelts, a process that has temporally paralleled the commercialization of beef, has led to the virtual extermination of food animals in certain zones. Such is the case with the peccary. The current generalization of firearms among the peasants, unavailable before about 1950, has further contributed to the depletion of game supplies.

Peasants of the region today are geographically quite mobile and have since 1950 dispersed over the area to dis-tribute themselves more favorably with respect to critical resources such as wild game and good garden forest free of the cattle menace. Stress levels run high, as manifested by a messianic movement that has attracted peasant groups across the Beni in recent years.

The Beni peasant, powerless and poor, has been neglected by national and local governments. Favored instead, even by the Agrarian Reform, have been the powerful cattle interests. International development agencies, operating with loans and

technical assistance, have promoted the expansion of the ranching sector and must therefore assume part of the responsibility for the current plight of the Beni peasant.

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

### The Problem Discussed

This research seeks to assess the consequences of the recent commercialization of regional beef cattle for the Ignacianos, a sub-group of Moxos<sup>1</sup> Indians of the Beni Department in the eastern lowlands of Bolivia. Dispersed over numerous settlements administratively dependent on San Ignacio, capital of the Beni province of Moxos, Ignacianos today comprise a peasantry numbering about 6,000 that is only marginally integrated vis-à-vis regional and national socio-economic institutions.

The Ignacianos are descendents of Indians that underwent a major socio-cultural transformation with the arrival of Europeans, and Ignacianos today appear to be experiencing a second such transformation due to the commercialization of beef cattle. There is ethnographic evidence from the reports of early missionaries and explorers to suggest that the Moxos were in pre-Columbian times organized into Tropical-Forest Chiefdoms, or societies characterized by "intervillage federation" (Steward and Faron 1959: 252-57; Steward 1963: 1-41). Whether chiefdom or otherwise, the aboriginal "level of socio-cultural integration" was markedly transformed when the Moxos were settled in Jesuit missions for a century (1667-1767)

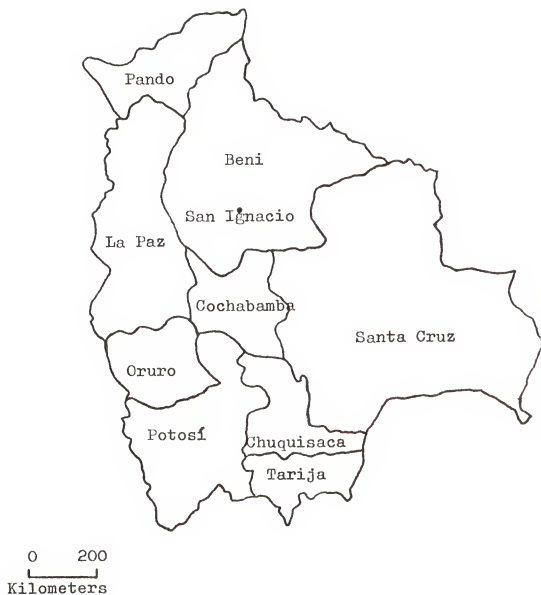


Figure 1  
The Departments of Bolivia



during the Spanish colonial era. By the time the Jesuits departed the region in 1778, the Moxos exhibited a Modern-Indian type of culture, or one "resulting from the fusion of aboriginal and, in the main, Iberian institutions and culture patterns of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" (Wagley and Harris 1968: 83). It is this Modern-Indian type of culture that has survived well into the present century and that Ignacianos bear today. Ignaciano culture is, however, currently under much strain as a result of the commercialization of local beef cattle, an ongoing process which began in the late 1940's. It is this process that seems to be driving forward a second major transformation of native society and culture.

Recent years have witnessed an expanding cattle frontier in the American tropics, often as a part of schemes for regional and national development. Respecting the Brazilian Amazon,

Development experience in other countries and regions shows that cattle breeding can be an excellent way of settling in new areas, since cattle ranches are generally followed by commercial centers of growing importance. It is therefore possible that this occupation pattern will become the stable driving force behind the regional economy, since in Amazonia it appears to offer the greatest potential. (From Brazilian Bulletin, August, 1974; quoted in Davis 1977: 111.)

The expansion of this cattle frontier, with consequences for the physical environment as well as for peasants and unacculturated tribal Indians, is currently a topical concern (e.g.,

Davis 1977: 111-57). Darcy Ribeiro, after considering the forms that contact between Luso-Brazilians and Indians has taken in Brazil, defines three "economic frontiers of civilization": an extractive, an agricultural, and a pastoral frontier (Ribeiro 1970: 21-123ff). The consequences of contact on each of these frontiers have been distinct, and always a function of the invading society's need for indigenous land, labor, and women. Ranching is land-extensive and requires only a modest labor force; moreover, invaders on a pastoral frontier are usually accompanied by their wives. Thus, such invaders can accept little less than the removal of indigenous occupants from the grazing zone, a removal made more urgent when the Indians begin to hunt cattle either as a supplement to wild game or a substitute for it. Commonly, such contact is characterized initially by violent clashes followed ultimately by either annihilation or flight, the latter often accompanied by dispersion.

Ribeiro's logic suggests that Ignacianos must either flee or face annihilation. And flight with dispersion has indeed occurred since the late 1940's. The historical and ecological conditions that govern contact on the cattle frontier of San Ignacio, however, are different from those of the modal case that seems to inform Ribeiro's conception of a pastoral frontier. First, Ignacianos (and certain other native groups of the Beni) are not unacculturated tropical-forest Indians but rather Indian peasants whose culture, a

blend of pre-Columbian Amazonian and seventeenth-century Iberian patterns, is the result of a century of sustained and Jesuit-mediated colonial contact. And second, cattle graze mainly on natural grasses of the savannah, the predominant land-form of the region. In contrast to other areas of the American tropics, such as the Matto Grosso, there has been little clearing of forest in order to plant pasture grasses. But the consequences of the Beni cattle frontier, nonetheless, have been profound for Ignacianos and for other such groups of the area. The analysis of those consequences that is presented here strives to set forth and evaluate the entire complex of interdependent factors that bear on the problem. There is, for example, the commercialization of skins and pelts of several of the regional fauna that has paralleled the commercialization of beef cattle. There is the Agrarian Reform, a product of the Revolution of 1952, which has been implemented in the face of cattle commercialization and rising land values. And there is the Chaco War (1932-1935), a bitter campaign in which many Ignacianos fought and which sowed the seeds of peasant unrest and set the stage for the processes of commercialization and agrarian reform.

Put another way, the research here described is a study of socio-cultural change over the past approximately fifty years. Implicit in the research problem and strategy of investigation are certain theoretical orientations which should at least briefly be made explicit. The evolution of

a particular society, for example, is here broadly viewed as "an adaptive process whereby the society solves problems with respect to the natural and to the human-competitive environment" (Service 1975: 96). Further, fundamental culture changes "are basically traceable to new adaptations required by changing technology and productive arrangements" (Steward 1955: 37).

The material to follow is organized around the theme of two conflicting social systems. The community of San Ignacio de Moxos is conceived as composed of a Spanish system whose cultural origins derive from colonial Santa Cruz de la Sierra to the south, whence most of the "Whites" (i.e., "Blancos," or non-Indians) of the community emigrated over the past hundred years; and an indigenous system whose cultural origins derive from the Jesuit mission of San Ignacio de Loyola. The community of San Ignacio, then, is held to be a system of interrelated parts and constitutes the unit of study. But what is happening to peasants of San Ignacio is happening to peasants of other Beni communities, so that San Ignacio is in effect a "sample" of the Beni cattle region. This conceptual approach of viewing such a system as sample is reasonable since "the strength or weakness of larger systems . . . ultimately rests upon smaller units. Logically, it follows that if we are to understand the effects of change we should direct our attentions to unitary systems and their interrelationships" (Arensberg and Kimball 1972: 272).

The chapters to follow will scrutinize the differential ways in which each of the two systems articulates with the natural environment, as well as the role of each in the regional and national economies. A set of relations will be portrayed, or more precisely, a set of changing relations; for the last nearly fifty years, but especially the last thirty, have witnessed profound and rapid changes in the way the two systems relate to each other as well as in the way each relates to the natural environment and behaves in the regional economy.

#### The Field Situation

The material presented here is the result of the writer's field investigations in Bolivia on two occasions, the first for a period of three months in 1976, the second during a period of eighteen months beginning in August of 1977. A survey of native groups was conducted during the first trip to Bolivia, especially native peasant groups of the Beni pampas. The objective at that time was to gather information on life circumstances and thus define a problem which could be researched more fully at a later date. It was obvious to the writer during this initial sojourn that the Ignacianos,<sup>2</sup> of San Ignacio de Moxos, were the least dispersed of the pampean Indian peasant groups with Jesuitic socio-cultural forms still viable. It is no coincidence that in Bolivia San Ignacio is sometimes referred to as the Folklore Capital of the Beni.

Equally obvious during this first visit were the stressful and untoward changes which Ignacianos are experiencing, changes so clearly attributable to the commercialization of beef cattle and other related events of recent times. It was just after this initial survey that the problem here posed and analyzed was formulated.

The writer returned to Bolivia a year later to establish residency in San Ignacio de Moxos and begin the tedious work of pursuing the problem more fully. He remained there for the following eighteen months, living with a variety of Indian families for varying periods of time, observing their modes of making a living, discussing their problems, and generally sharing with them the drama of daily life. This approach, generally called "participant observation," is of long-standing tradition in anthropology.

Approximately the first six months were spent moving about the Ignaciano territory, observing, listening, recording. This is a critical time during the field experience, for not only are impressions made which may ultimately spell success or failure for the enterprise, but also the important things in life from the native point of view are learned and their degree of bearing on the research problem. In this way, so to speak, the variables are defined. This period also serves to bring to light the extent of human behavioral variation. There are older Ignacianos, for example, born at the turn of the century and before, who speak little if any Spanish and

who well remember when San Ignacio was an Indian community and Whites in the area were few. And then by contrast there are young Ignacianos, born after 1950, who speak the native language only haltingly and who adhere with considerably less vigor to traditional culture patterns than do those of the grand-parental generation. It is during this initial period too that certain individuals, known as "key informants" in the trade, are selected by an investigator to serve as consultants in certain domains of culture. Such individuals may be chosen because they are recognized as "experts" in such domains by their people, and, of course, because they are willing and able to communicate that expertise to an outsider. But quite often, as it happens, such informants are merely the products of fortuituous encounters in the field, individuals who exhibit an especially friendly disposition toward the investigator, or with whom the latter is otherwise particularly comfortable for whatever reasons, and who manifest the ability and willingness, when not desire, to communicate relevant information.

While the processes of defining variables, spotting variation, and selecting informants continued to a degree throughout the writer's stay in the field, they were especially important during the initial six months for the part they played in helping to chart a course to be followed thereafter. Once such a course was fixed, the remaining work consisted of pursuing to ever-greater depth those matters already defined as relevant.

The writer lived with a wide variety of Indian families throughout the Ignaciano territory. Remuneration for food and lodging in and near San Ignacio more commonly took the form of cash since cash there was always in short supply and great demand. In the remoter areas, however, especially up the River Apére, where cash transactions are few, remuneration often took the form of "gifts" of useful items. Cash payments or the equivalent in goods to informants for their time were always at a rate above the local daily wage. No significant difficulties were encountered in eliciting the cooperation of the native sector of the community.

The writer, who does not possess an operational command of the native language, was reduced to working in Spanish. The handicaps here are obvious and fully recognized. The vast majority of Ignacianos, however, do speak considerable Spanish and many of them are totally bilingual. Only rarely were interpreters employed. As field work progressed and a picture of the life circumstances of Ignacianos, both at the time of the study and during the recent past, began to form in the mind of the writer, questions of greater precision could be put to key informants during increasingly structured interviews. Such interviews were structured through the use of open-ended questionnaires that dealt with those domains of culture determined pertinent to the problem under study. More than a dozen individuals served the writer as key informants and submitted freely and frequently to the structured



interviews. Much information, however, was also obtained from numerous individuals with whom the writer had only sporadic and limited contact in the course of his movements across the Ignaciano territory. Interviews were often taped in the interest of saving time as well as of enhancing recording accuracy, and then later transcribed by the writer at his San Ignacio base. Local assistants were on occasion employed, after some training by the writer, to collect demographic and other kinds of data.

Difficulties met with during the course of the field investigation were of two kinds. The first kind derives from the dispersion of the native population and the extremes of the physical environment, while the second relates to the perceptions held by local political and power factions from the non-Indian sector regarding the writer's intentions and doings in the area. Already mentioned was the necessity of investigating behavioral variation. Such variation is often attributable to variation over the Ignaciano territory in terms of environmental factors such as the availability of wild game and fish, or the quality of forest for making gardens. The factors of land tenure and proximity of cattle to human settlements also vary across the territory and figure importantly in the life conditions of Ignacianos. The majority of Ignacianos do not live in San Ignacio proper, but rather in settlements of the outlying areas; the greatest rectilinear distance between any two such settlements is

about 130 kilometers. San Ignacio, however, is important in the lives of all Ignacianos as a trading and ceremonial focus; the native culture turns on the church and church-related activities and there is always traffic between the town and outlying settlements, traffic that becomes heavy during the major religious celebrations. The writer, therefore, was forced to do as the Ignacianos do themselves: to keep one eye cocked on San Ignacio and activities there, the other on the various and distinctive outlying settlements. Correspondingly, the field work required that he be mobile in a region where the physical obstacles to mobility can be staggering.

Even in the dry season the zone is normally densely punctuated with sloughs and often extensive water-filled depressions that usually support a lush aquatic vegetation. In the rainy season the problem of mobility is compounded, for then much of the pampa is overlain with as much as two feet or more of water. Such obstacles impede movement not only between settlements, but also between gardens and house sites of the same settlement. The only way to negotiate these marshy impasses is on foot, a time-consuming and exhausting exercise.

In summary, then, San Ignacio is no vantage point for one who aspires to account for the totality of factors that currently bear on the life conditions of Ignacianos. But, on the other hand, the limits of time and energy do tend to

oppose the efforts of a lone investigator to gain the wider prospect.

The second class of difficulties, those of a political character, were at times the source of considerable tension for the writer. The nature of the study, understandably, required that much time be spent working with the native peasant sector of the community, a state of affairs which the White power structure as well as some factions of the Left viewed with apprehension. The power structure, with its keen vested interest in maintenance of the status quo and corresponding near-paranoid fear of Communists, was always alert to any efforts to organize or otherwise foment discontent and unrest among the native peasantry.<sup>3</sup> The local Left, on the other hand, suspected the writer of being a foreign agent.<sup>4</sup> Hostile murmurings, often couched in terms of nationalism, continuously reached the writer in the small community of San Ignacio. Moreover, suspicion and apprehension on all sides were heightened in anticipation of the national elections held in July of 1978, and continued unabated throughout the following period of uncertainty during which there were two military coups. Before Christmas of 1977, the writer was denounced to local authorities and summoned by the captain of the local guard to appear at the subprefecture with personal documents. There, the captain asked him to give an account of himself, logged his passport and visa numbers, cursorily read some letters of reference, then

released him. The writer was not formally charged, or told why he was summoned, though it was rumored soon thereafter that someone had denounced him as an undesirable alien. There were no more such encounters with the local police.<sup>5</sup>

The topic of the study required that the researcher also take information from the non-native sector of the community. All such efforts, it will now be understood, were necessarily carried out with great circumspection. Generally, such efforts were not made until well into the writer's field stay and only after he came to know the different factions and their leaders, and could thus assess the risks of such advances and know better how to proceed. Much information emerged from casual conversations, though there were a few informants who submitted to more formal structured interviews. Often information had to be obtained obliquely and verified through alternate sources and cross-checking. Prudence, discretion, and a very low profile, therefore, were demanded when working with the non-native sector, not only to avoid antagonizing mutually hostile factions within that sector, but also to avoid alienating the native sector and compromising amicable relations there that had been achieved with considerable sacrifice. A latent animosity everywhere characterizes the Indian attitude toward the White, and the writer's favorable rapport with critical elements of the Indian sector hinged on his dissociation from White interests in the native mind.

# Notes to Chapter I

<sup>1</sup>The term "Moxo" (or "Mojo"), cause of much confusion, has geographic, linguistic, and social referents, all of which vary with historical periods. The boundaries of the modern Beni Department correspond roughly to those of the colonial Province of Moxos, a region administered by the Jesuits from 1667 to 1767. "Moxos" is still sometimes used loosely to refer to the Beni, though today one of the provincial subdivisions of the department also bears the name. Possibly deriving from "Morocósi," according to Father Marbán (Métraux 1942: 53) the most widely spoken of the five languages encountered by the Jesuits in the course of their early evangelical endeavors, the term came to refer throughout the mission period to a numerous and widespread linguistic group which seems to have aboriginally resided mainly along the upper Mamoré and its western tributaries, in what is now the southern and southwestern Beni Department. Among the native groups settled in Loreto, first of the mission towns and founded in 1682, a Moxo dialect was the one most commonly spoken. Because it was so widespread, Moxo was adopted by the Jesuits as the official language in several of the larger missions. In 1767, year of the expulsion of the Society, Moxo was spoken in Loreto, Trinidad, San Ignacio, and San Francisco Xavier; and had been spoken in two other missions, San Luis and San José, whose existences were short-lived. Interestingly, there were no Moxos proper settled in San Ignacio, field site of this study (Métraux 1942: 54-55). Today, the few scholarly treatments of native peoples of the eastern regions of Bolivia (e.g., Riester 1976) employ the term to refer to those speakers of one of the Arawakan Moxo dialects, and it is in this sense that the term is used here. In popular accounts and conversation, however, "Mojo" (or "Mojeño") may refer to any aborigine of the Beni savannahs. The Moxos are currently scattered over the Beni Department and beyond, though are found mainly in the provinces of Cercado, Mojos, and Marbán. The chief towns to which they affiliate, and in and near which many of them reside, are Trinidad, San Ignacio, San Francisco (de Mojos), San Lorenzo, and Loreto.

<sup>2</sup>Native peasant groups of the pampas often go by the names of the Jesuit mission towns in which their ancestors were settled. There are, therefore, Ignacianos, Trinitarios, Loretanos, and so on. The Movimas, however, are an exception, being descendents of natives settled in the mission town of Santa Ana, now capital of the Beni province of Yacúma.

<sup>3</sup>Apprehensions here were perhaps diminished to a degree by the general view in the area that North-American gringos are staunch enemies of comunistas. That same view, however, did little to assuage the feelings of the local Left toward the investigator.

<sup>4</sup>There is some evidence that elements of the power structure also held this view, though to the extent that the writer was held to be anti-comunista, it probably created little concern.

<sup>5</sup>Such denuncias are extremely common in San Ignacio. The writer had upon first arriving in the town presented such documents and letters of reference, one being of an official character from La Paz, to the local subprefect as is customary procedure. Of this the captain was undoubtedly aware. Such official letters from La Paz, parenthetically, are of dubious value anywhere in the Oriente, or eastern lowlands, but are certainly worth less in the more recondite reaches.

## CHAPTER II THE SETTING

### Physical Setting of the Beni Department

The Beni Department is set in the eastern lowlands of Bolivia, a vast area which runs from the foothills of the Cordillera Real in the west to the Brazilian frontier of Matto Grosso in the east, and from the Rivers Abunã and Madera in the north to the plains of the Gran Chaco in the south.<sup>1</sup> This lowland area accounts for just above 70 percent of the national territory, a fact that hardly squares with the convention of referring to Bolivia as an Andean country. Part of what geologists often denote as the Beni Basin, the department has an areal extent of 213,564 square kilometers, about 20 percent of the national territory, and is the second largest of the nine departments of the Republic.

The Beni Basin, writes William Denevan, "is filled with fine-grained unconsolidated sediments of Quaternary age overlying a crystalline basement of rock similar to that in exposures of the Pre-Cambrian Brazilian Shield. Seismic studies and stratigraphic drilling indicate that the sedimentary cover attains a thickness of over 18,000 feet at the base of the Andes and decreases to about 2,000 feet along the lower Río Apére. East of the Río Mamoré the cover is less than 1,000 feet thick and is penetrated by erosional

remnants of the Shield which form isolated hills, low ridges, and local rapids in the rivers" (Denevan 1966: 6). At the center of the basin lie the Llanos de Moxos, a vast, flat, and stoneless alluvial plain of low gradient that drains to the north.

Three river systems, all of which belong to the larger Amazon network, imperfectly drain the llanos. The most important river, the Mamoré, bisects the Beni Department in its highly serpentine northerly course of more than a thousand kilometers. Numerous affluents, some of which arborize greatly toward their forested head regions in the west, drain the central flanks of the Cordillera Real as they drift north-easterly across the pampas to empty into the Mamoré; among them are the Rivers Chapare, Sécure, Tijamuchi, Apére, and Yacuma. The River Beni, forming the second system, drains the northern sector of the Cordillera Real and marks the boundary of the Beni Department with part of La Paz Department and with all of Pando. The River Beni joins with the Madre de Dios at Riberalta, whence the two continue as one until the frontier town of Villa Bella, where they enter the Madera. The River Iténez, or Guaporé, trunk of the third river system, rises in the mountains of the Matto Grosso and flows northwesterly, marking the boundary with Brazil before flowing into the Mamoré at about 190 kilometers above the border town of Guayaramerín. The three systems, therefore, ultimately pour their waters into the River Madeira, a major tributary of the Amazon.



In addition to the riverine complex, the llanos are densely dotted with shallow lakes (lagunas) of greater or lesser size, the two largest being Roqagua and Rogoaguado.

The Beni Department is a complex blend of savannah and forest.<sup>2</sup> Aerial and satellite photography show about 42 percent ( $89,707 \text{ km}^2$ ) of the department as grassland and/or shrub, and just under 43 percent ( $91,626 \text{ km}^2$ ) as forest (Brockman 1978: 49-50). The greater part of the forest, though, is located to the north, west, and south. The ratio of grassland to forest increases considerably toward the central region of the department, the llanos, where about 50 percent ( $90,650 \text{ km}^2$ ) of the area is "grassy savanna," about 30 percent ( $54,390 \text{ km}^2$ ) is "scrub or palm savanna," and about 20 percent ( $36,260 \text{ km}^2$ ) consists of gallery forest and small, slightly elevated patches of forest known locally as islas ("islands")<sup>3</sup> (Denevan 1966: 11, 15). Proceeding southwesterly over the llanos along the tributary rivers of the Mamoré and their numerous affluents, the narrow bands of gallery forest fan out to form the vast forested reaches of the lower eastern slopes of the cordillera.

The terrain factors of low relief, low gradient, and inadequate water outlets give rise to the annual flooding of the llanos for which the Beni is famous. The elevation of the llanos ranges from 300 meters above sea level at Todos Santos on the River Chapare in the south to 172 meters at Riberalta in the north, a gradient of about 0.2 meters per kilometer. Accordingly, the rivers of the Beni, shallow and

with lightly incised beds, meander greatly in their courses. The river distance along the Mamoré between the mouth of the Río Grande and the port of Guayaramerín, for example, is about 1,041 kilometers (Monje Roca 1977: 46-47), nearly twice the linear distance of 560 kilometers between the two points. The channels of most of the rivers shift notoriously, forming oxbow lakes rich in aquatic fauna along the margins. The main channel of the Mamoré, a river where such lakes extend for some distance to either side, can shift as much as a kilometer from one year to the next in the vicinity of Trinidad. Only a narrow gap in the Brazilian Shield, the northern outlet of the Beni riverine complex into the River Madeira cannot accommodate the heavy flow of water during the summer rainy season (November-March), so that the waters of the lightly incised and greatly meandering rivers to the south are forced out of their shallow bounds and onto the surrounding plains.

The flood waters, an accumulation of rain that falls locally as well as that which falls along the flanks of the cordillera and enters the rivers that course across the llanos, usually peak after the middle of the rainy season, which runs from late November through March.<sup>4</sup> The flooded aspect of the plains, relieved only by occasional islas and stretches of high pampa with scrub vegetation, has led some observers to describe the area during seasons of heavy flooding as a vast lake. By the end of March, though, the waters have begun to recede, leaving in their wake an infinity of watery depressions,

some teeming with fish. Many such depressions<sup>5</sup> retain water throughout the winter dry season, but others by mid-August, a time when drought conditions often obtain in the region, have become clod mosaics of parched, yellow earth supporting tall clumps of rank, browning grass.

The summer season (October-April) in the Beni is hot and humid, while the winter months (May-September) are warm and dry. Both average annual rainfall and length of the rainy season increase from east to west across the department, an increase which is dramatic along the southwest frontier with Cochabamba, where moisture-laden winds are forced up abruptly by the cordillera. Average annual rainfall figures are 1,374 millimeters for Magdalena in the east, 1,672 millimeters for Guayaramerín in the north, 1,893 millimeters for Trinidad, and 1,866 millimeters for Reyes on the western fringe of the department. To the southwest, however, in Todos Santos on the River Chapare, Cochabamba Department, the annual average rises to 2,907 millimeters, one of the highest in the country. Magdalena has six months with rainfall under 100 millimeters, Guayaramerín and Trinidad have five such months, while Todos Santos has only two (Unzueta 1975: 283-89; 310).

Average annual temperatures decrease only slightly from north to south over the department, as do also both the highest and lowest monthly averages. The differentials between the highest and lowest monthly averages, however, increase from north to south. Generally, though, such

decreases and increases tend to be less on the llanos. The average annual temperature in Trinidad over a nineteen-year period was 26.8 degrees centigrade, with the highest monthly (November) average at 27.9 degrees centigrade and the lowest monthly (July) average at 23.4 degrees centigrade (Unzueta 1975: 285).

While the prevailing winds<sup>6</sup> of the llanos are out of the northwest during most of the year, occasional antarctic fronts, lasting from a couple of days to a week and known locally as sures ("southers"), bring strong winds, rapidly plummeting temperatures and sometimes rain during the winter dry season. These southern winds can reach gale force, and temperatures can drop as much as 25 degrees centigrade in just a few hours.<sup>7</sup>

There is considerable variation in soils across the Beni Basin and generalizations for large areas are hard to make.<sup>8</sup> Pampa soils are alluvial, of Quaternary age, with greater laterization and compactness on the llanos to the north of Trinidad than on those to the south. Older and highly leached podzols are overlain by younger alluvial soils (Muñoz Reyes 1977: 86-89), and surface soils most everywhere are underlain by a claypan, impermeable to both water and plant roots. Drainage of such soils is generally poor and fertility is low (Cochrane 1973: 292-94). The alluvial surface soils of forested areas, both isla and gallery forest, are deeper and better drained. Soils of gallery forest, generally considered the best for agriculture, "consist of

young alluvial fine sandy loams, and loams that are usually light brown in color. The isla soils, consisting of old alluvium, are grayish-brown loams, loamy sands, and occasionally fine sands. . . . No clay pans or mottling were observed in forest soils" (Denevan 1966: 13).

Vegetation patterns<sup>9</sup> of the llanos area are determined primarily by terrain relief and seasonal flooding, though the annual firing of the grasslands by local ranchers<sup>10</sup> as well as the wandering and foraging of cattle over elevated forested zones during flood season also play a role (Denevan 1966: 16-17). The pampas are dominated by a wide variety of gramineous species, with an occasional lone palm of motacú (Attalea princeps), total (Acrocomia totali), or cusi (Orbignya phareolata) to relieve an otherwise open prospect. The lowest areas, curiches and bajíos (see Note 5, Chapter 2), support sedges and grasses such as arrocillo (Oeryza latifolia and Leersia hexandra) and cañuela (Echinocloa polystachya and Hymenachne amplexicaulis). Occasionally lakelets (lagunetas), bajíos and other watery depressions are covered with floating plants such as the giant water lily (Victoria regia) and the water hyacinth (Eichornia), or with thick mats of floating vegetation known as yomomos, which may even support small trees.<sup>11</sup> Canes and bamboos, such as chuchío (Ginerium sagittatum)<sup>12</sup> and tacuara (Arundo donax), often border rivers, streams, and lakes.

Forest type varies across the department. Higher areas of pampa, not subject to prolonged (if any) periods of

inundation, are sometimes covered with low trees and scrub vegetation. Such areas, known as chaparrales, usually occur at pampa-forest boundaries.<sup>13</sup> Much if not most of the forest, gallery and isla, of the llanos proper is seasonal evergreen or seasonal semievergreen, though galleries of rain-forest occur the length of the Mamoré as well as along the upper reaches of tributary rivers to the west and southwest (Cochrane 1973: 189). Timber extraction, fire agriculture, and foraging cattle all affect the forest associations within the llanos (Denevan 1966: 16). Tajibo (Tabebuia suberosa), motacú (Attalea princeps), ambaibo (Cecropia leucocoma), and bibosi (Ficus malapalo) are common, with hardwoods such as mara ("mahogany," Swietenia macrophylla), palomaria (Calophyllum brasiliense), and cedro ("cedar," Cedrela boliviana) in the less accessible gallery forest.

The Beni Department supports an essentially Amazonian faunal complex.<sup>14</sup> Among the felines are the tigre ("jaguar," Felis onca), widely held in awe and fear by native peoples of the region, the león ("puma," Felis concolor), the gato montés ("wildcat," Felis geoffroy), and the tigrillo, or gato onza ("ocelot," Felis pardalis). The monkeys have numerous representatives, including the large and extremely vocal manechi ("howler monkey," Alouatta caraya), the cuatro ojos (Actus boliviensis), and the marimono ("spider monkey," Ateles). Among the agoutis, there are the jochi pintado (Agouti paca), highly esteemed for its meat, and the jochi

colorado (*Dasyprocta variegata boliviae*). The tatú (*Dasypus novemcinctus*), an armadillo and food animal, is very common in the region. Both the taitetú ("collared peccary," *Tayassu tajacu*) and the puerco de tropa ("white-lipped peccary," *Tayassu pecari*), the latter of which runs in herds of more than 200 animals, inhabit the forests. The anta ("tapir," *Tapirus terrestris*), a large ungulate valued for the quantity of meat and fat in a single animal, resides in forested areas very near bodies of water. There are deer of both the pampa and the forest. Of the former, the ciervo ("swamp deer," *Blastoceros dichotomus*) inhabits the curiches and low areas of the plains. In the forest is found the huaso ("brocket deer," *Mazama simplicornis*), while the wide roving hurina ("brocket deer," *Mazama americana*) can be found on the pampa, especially in chaparrales, or in the forest, often in abandoned gardens.

The bird fauna is among the richest in all of South America. In addition to the endless variety of species native to the area, the llanos are descended upon by birds from far and wide during the early dry season to feed upon the fish that remain in pools everywhere once the waters recede. Among the waders, herons, storks and flamingos abound in the watery depressions of the pampas; and the cuervo (*Phalacrocorax olivaceus*), a black cormorant, is ubiquitous on the lakes and rivers of the region, often alighting on the water in flocks of literally hundreds. Wild ducks are

common in numerous species, while tinamous inhabit the pampas and the forests. Among the curassows, there are the pava campanilla (Pipili cumanensis nattereri), the pava motún (Mitu mitu), and the pava pintada (?), all valued game fowl. Both the tucán ("toucan," Ramphastus) and the paraba ("Macaw," Ara) are represented by various species and are important to native peoples for their bright plumage which serves as adornment. And the píyu ("ostrich," Rhea americana), largest of the South American avians, lives on the pampas, where it can often be seen intermingled with grazing cattle.

The swamps, lakes, and rivers of the region support an abundant aquatic fauna. Various species of caimán ("cayman," Caiman) and lagarto<sup>15</sup> occur widely and are highly valued commercially for their hides, a matter which threatens some species with extinction in the very near future. The bufeo ("river dolphin," Inia boliviensis) is common in most all the rivers of the Beni, while the manatí ("river manatee," Trichechus inunguis) occurs in the large rivers. An immense variety of fish inhabit the waters of the region. The surubí (Pseudopiasystema fasciatum) and the pacú (Hyleus setiger and Myelus pacu), both among the most highly esteemed of the food fish, are found in the deeper river waters, while the dorado (Salminus), the sábalo (Prochilodus nigricans), the ventón (?), and the blanquillo (?), all important food fish, are common in most rivers and streams. The palometa ("piranha," Serrasal-mus), the meat of which is widely consumed by peasants of



the area, is ubiquitous, being found in swamps as well as in rivers, lakes, and streams. During the flood months, when rivers and lakes, bajíos and curiches virtually all communicate with one another, many fish disperse over wide areas through the numerous arroyos ("streams") and rivulets incised everywhere in the pampas; and some fish, like the piranha, even stray freely over the flooded pampas.

To summarize, then, the lowland tropical complex of rivers, lakes, forests and savannahs is a unique region of the Amazon Basin and certainly contrasts sharply with the highland Andean plateau and valley settings to the west. But contrasts and variations within the region, both at any point in time and over periods of time, are also striking. Among the chief of these, certainly, is the seasonal contrast, where extremes of flooding and drought regularly occur in a single year. Flood intensity varies from year to year, or over the region in any single year, depending on which rivers receive the most rainfall from the cordillera. It is to these extremes, especially the flooding, that human societies have had to adjust since early times. Many of the Jesuit missions were forced to relocate in response to flooding, and peasants today, who sometimes make gardens along the Mamoré near the marketing center of Trinidad to take advantage of the low forest growth and richer alluvial soils, often sustain heavy losses and become refugees after an unforeseen rise of the river or shift in channel.

### Human Setting of the Beni Department

The Beni Department, formerly the Province of Moxos and dependent administratively on Santa Cruz de la Sierra, attained to departmental status in 1842 under the presidency of José Ballivián. Composed today of eight provinces (provincias), the department supported an official population of 167,969 in 1976 (Bolivia 1978a: 9)<sup>16</sup> and a population density of 0.79 inhabitants per square kilometer. It is thus the second (Pando is first) least populous as well as the second least densely populated department of the Republic. The 1976 population figure represents a gain of 96,333 inhabitants over the official 1950 census figure of 71,636 (Bolivia 1978a: 9), a departmental population increase of 134 percent over the past quarter century.

The three "cities" of Trinidad (population 27,583), Riberalta (population 18,032), and Guayaramerín (population 12,504) account for 35 percent of the official population of the department, followed by Santa Ana de Yacuma with 5,465 inhabitants (Bolivia 1978b: 1-3). The above 1976 population figure for Trinidad, capital of the department, represents a 160 percent increase over the official 1950 census figure of 10,607. Aside from the three cities named above,<sup>17</sup> the remainder of the population is distributed over the following census categories: provincial capitals: 17,360 (10%); cantonal seats: 20,542 (12%); important settlements (localidades importantes): 10,428 (6%); and dispersed population: 61,520 (37%) (Bolivia 1978b: 1-3).<sup>18</sup>

The region is without significant manufacturing industry, and the few cities are poorly developed in terms of wealth, power, and administrative influence. Comestibles, carbonated soft drinks, tobacco, furniture, and leather goods are produced on a small scale for the regional market, with some extraction for export of India rubber (caucho), Brazil nuts (castaña), and tropical hardwoods, especially mahogany (mara). Cattle ranching is by far chief of regional income-generating activities, though visible evidence of such income in terms of local investments is sparse. Most of the Beni meat is flown to La Paz and the mining centers, and until recently modest quantities were exported to Perú and Chile (Carvalho 1976: 56-67).<sup>19</sup>

The overwhelmingly predominant occupations of the rural population are subsistence agriculture and ranch work, the latter occasionally full-time and permanent but more often irregular and supplementary. The small towns are composed of a small economic and power elite, mostly White ranchers who are also involved in local commerce,<sup>20</sup> and a large peasant sector, often Amerindian, that maintains subsistence gardens in nearby forest and that provides the town and ranches with food and labor. The principal urban centers of the Beni, such as Trinidad, exhibit only an incipient division of labor. Service jobs proliferate in Trinidad: waiters, bartenders, motorcycle-taxi drivers, domestics, stevedores, and public servants are among the more salient categories. A motley array

of street vendors everywhere hawk a miscellany of candies, cigarettes, chewing gum, soft drinks, and foodstuffs. But for an occasional hotel, cinema, bank or restaurant, commercial houses dominate the streets and seem to be the focus of what bustle is to be found. No sharp rural-urban distinction can be drawn in the Beni. Some of the residents of Trinidad, for example, are peasants only recently arrived from the countryside, never very far, in search of a physically less demanding life. More than a few of these peasants maintain gardens along the Mamoré while working irregularly as urban menials, and many will eventually return to the rural setting. But if the population centers of Trinidad, Riberalta and Guayaramerín must be qualified as "urban," then the remaining 65 percent of the population of the department might be said to be "rural."

The numerous rivers of the Beni have traditionally served as important arteries of communication. Cargo from both Cochabamba and Santa Cruz is taken to Puerto Villaroel, whence it is dispatched by boat down the Rivers Ichilo and Mamoré to Trinidad and Guayaramerín.

Not a single all-weather motor road yet connects the Beni with other regions of the country. There are 287 kilometers of main motor road (carreteras principales) within the Beni (Bolivia 1978a: 25), though surfaces are unpaved and the roads thus unserviceable during much of the rainy season. Not included in the above statistic is the recently completed

motor road from Trinidad through San Ignacio to San Borja in the west, thence to Sapecho and up through North Yungas to La Paz. Negotiable only in the dry season, this road is an unpaved terreplein, the causeway of which is pierced at strategic points by corrugated steel culverts to relieve the considerable water pressure that forms during flood season. Since the drainage of the llanos is highly unstable, however, such pressure points vary unpredictably so that location of the culverts is problematic and segments of the lengthy terreplein are forever subject to erosion. The numerous rivers between Trinidad and San Borja are crossed with puentes pontones, or wooden flying bridges worked by cables, that occasionally succumb to the strains of overloaded timber trucks and other heavy vehicles. Such a road linking Trinidad to Santa Cruz is now essentially complete, and one between San Ignacio and Cochabamba is projected. All these roads are to ultimately converge on Trinidad, and there join with the Mamoré, principal fluvial artery of the region.

Since the inauguration of commercial aviation with the landing of a Junker in the Beni in 1926, the airplane has done much to link the cities and towns of the Beni and eastern regions with each other as well as to span the immense cultural and geographic divide that has always separated the highlands and the lowlands. Both Lloyd Aéreo Boliviano (LAB), the national airline, and Transporte Aéreo Militar (TAM), the military airline, provide regular commercial passenger

service within the eastern regions and between them and the principal cities of the highlands. But in the Beni only Trinidad has a paved runway, so that air traffic is frequently disrupted during the rainy season, when a few hours of heavy rain can close any of the dirt or grass airstrips. Apart from the numerous parcels on any LAB passenger flight, much cargo, especially general supplies destined for the many commercial houses, enters the Beni aboard meat planes (aviones carniceros) that will return from the lowlands to La Paz and other high-land cities laden with fresh beef. By far most of the more than 700 airstrips (Nagashiro 1975: 84) of the Beni are found on cattle ranches, where the grass strips accommodate the single-engine aircraft commonly used by ranchers to visit their properties and ferry urgent supplies and personnel. Also scattered over the region are larger airstrips, likewise of grass, that operate in conjunction with beef-slaughtering facilities and that accommodate the twin-and quadri-engine meat planes.

Still widely used in the Beni, and certainly the most reliable year round, is the oxcart; and time-worn cart tracks everywhere lace the region, linking the numerous ranches and settlements. Horses are necessary to work the cattle, of course, and those ranchers whose properties are near their town houses will often commute by horse between town and ranch. But the most reliable mount in the region is the buey caballo, or riding ox, an animal undaunted by sloughs and curiches, in

part because of the added stability and traction provided by its cloven hooves.

Critically important to communications throughout the eastern regions is the radio. Most of the cities and larger towns have at least one station and even the poorest peasant is apt to have a receiver, perhaps even an antenna wire strung between bamboo poles above his house. People everywhere regularly tune their sets to the daily mensajes ("messages"), broadcast at noon and at night, in order to learn of the death or sickness of relatives and of the impending arrival or departure of travelers. Important business and commercial information is also communicated by radio message. Such radio stations in the smaller towns, often broadcasting for only a couple of hours each day, convey important information from the towns to their dependent surrounding hinterlands. Ranchers, for example, who invariably live in the towns, may impart orders to their personnel on the ranches by sending a radio message.

Also of importance to regional communications, especially in economic affairs, are the numerous shortwave radio transceivers, both private and state-owned. The latter, found in all cities of the lowlands and in most small towns, communicate with each other daily at pre-arranged times as well as with cities of the highlands. Beef sales to highland distributors by lowland ranchers and slaughtering firms are often negotiated by radio, and the arrivals of meat planes in the

lowlands must be coordinated by radio with local slaughtering operations since few slaughtering facilities have cold chambers.

Turning to the ethnic composition of the lowlands, eastern Bolivia today is characterized by an unusual diversity of ethnic and linguistic groups, a diversity commented on also by the first Europeans who entered the region in the late sixteenth century. Linguistic groupings found exclusively in the lowlands include Tacana, Leco, Moset  ne, Yurac  r  , Iton  ma, Mov  ma, Cayuvava, Canichana, Chiquito, and Otuqu  , while the more widely distributed groupings of Arawak, Tup  -Guaran  , Pano, Chapacura, Zamuco, Guaicur  , Mataco, and Mascoi are also found (Kelm 1966: 67). In addition, numerous as yet unclassified languages are spoken. Of the native "savannah tribes" of the Beni, the Mojo, Baure, Mov  ma, Iton  ma, Cayuvava, and Canichana are still (i.e., ca. 1965) represented, while important tribes extant on the forested fringes of the pampas include the Sirion  , Mor  , Ch  cobo, Maropa, Cavine  a, Chim  n, and Guarayo (Denevan 1966: 45-54; 112-115).

Both high population dispersion in areas difficult of access and contrasting criteria (rarely made explicit) for identifying the Indian are factors that help explain the great variation in census figures and population estimates for aboriginal peoples of the eastern lowlands. Then too, actual numbers can plummet over a short interval of time owing to



epidemic diseases that still strike native peoples with decimating force. The official census of 1950 (Muñoz Reyes 1977: 218-220) reports the sylvatic population (including the pampean groups) of the Republic<sup>21</sup> as including more than fifty-four "tribes" and 87,000 inhabitants. Twenty-three of the tribes, with a population totaling 43,050, are reported for the Beni. These 1950 figures, however, as Muñoz Reyes well advises, lack precision as well as fail to include numerous ethnic groups known to exist. Exact census data still do not exist today but for a very few groups, and any comprehensive demographic treatment of native peoples in these vast and remote parts relies perforce on estimates of varying degrees of reliability.

Heinz Kelm, a German ethnologist who has worked intermittently with native groups of the lowlands since at least the 1950's, argues that the 1950 census figure of 87,000 is too high since it includes "tribes that are extinct, unknown, acculturated, or that do not belong to the Bolivian lowlands" (Kelm 1966: 68; my translation). Writing somewhat later, Kelm proposes a figure of 77,000 Indians for the lowlands (Kelm 1971: 218). In a collection of population figures for non-Andean natives reported by the Symposium on Interethnic Friction in South America held in Barbados in 1971, Indians of the Bolivian lowlands (i.e., the Oriente) were held to number between 63,300 and 99,800 (Simposio 1971: 497). The Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), an organization that

has been engaged in linguistic and evangelical work among native groups of the lowlands in recent years, reports that the native population there in 1972 numbered not less than 68,850 nor more than 70,350 (Riester 1976: 34).

The German anthropologist Jürgen Riester, whose systematic investigations of specific ethnic groups as well as efforts to synthesize current ethnic knowledge about the region are among the best and most productive to date, faults all the figures listed above for being too low (Riester 1976: 31-37; 61-63).<sup>22</sup> According to Riester, forty-one "tribes" with a total estimated population of between 119,968 and 131,303 are found in the lowlands. Twenty-nine of those forty-one tribes, with an estimated population of from 5,673 to 6,053 (average population per tribe: 196-209), are threatened with extinction because of reduced numbers. And sixteen of the threatened twenty-nine, having a total population of 529 (average population per tribe: 33), will for certain not survive the decade of the 1970's because of "epidemics, violent subjugation, and exploitation" (Riester 1976: 33; my translation). The remaining twelve of the forty-one tribes, consisting of from 114,300 to 125,200 people (average population per tribe: 9,500-10,400), could ultimately survive if "quick and oriented help were initiated; if this does not happen, their physical disappearance will be inevitable: (Riester 1976: 33; my translation).

Moving away from an exclusive focus on Amerindian societies and toward a more global view of the region, the

"typology of subcultures for Latin America proposed by Wagley and Harris (1968: 81-117) is useful for setting forth a comprehensive characterization of the contemporary Beni population in cultural terms. The subcultural types which seem to best describe the area today are Tribal Indian, Indian Peasant (or Modern Indian), Mestizo Peasant,<sup>23</sup> Town, and perhaps an emerging Metropolitan Upper Class. Most of the communities and ethnic groups, however, are not pure representations of any single subcultural type but rather composites of two or more such types. The Chimanes, for example, grade culturally from isolated and unacculturated Tribal Indians settled on the numerous streams tributary to the upper River Ap re southwest of San Ignacio de Moxos to Indian Peasants settled in and above San Borja along the River Man qui. And so it is with other ethnic groups of the region that, like the Chimanes, have experienced strong acculturative pressures in recent years.

Taking "peasants" to mean "agricultural producers in effective control of land who carry on agriculture as a means of livelihood, not as a business for profit" (Wolf 1955: 1065), the vast majority of the population of the Beni is peasant. Among the Indian Peasants are the pampean groups, Indians whose attachments to tribal ways were largely lost during the period of Jesuit tutelage, but included also are some more recently acculturated Indians of the numerous tribal groups--e.g., the Chimanes--of the forests that fringe the pampas.

While both the Indian Peasant and the Mestizo Peasant are nearly equivalent in the way that each articulates with the physical environment and regional economy, it is the Indian Peasant who belongs to societies governed by cabildos ("town councils"), or whose world-view embraces sprits of the forests, pampas, lakes, and rivers. The epithet camba is used, often pejoratively, by non-peasants of the Beni to refer to an individual of the peasant sector, either mestizo or Indian, though the term seems to apply especially to the Indian peasant. Camba might translate into English as "rube," "rustic," or "hick." Highlanders, by contrast, often use camba to refer loosely to any individual from the eastern lowlands. The majority of the population of all the small towns across the Beni, and virtually the entire population of the ranches and settlements dependent on the towns, are peasant. Even Trinidad has a large peasant population, encompassing not only those individuals who maintain nearby subsistence gardens along the Mamoré, but also the numerous urban menials, who may or may not maintain such gardens at any given time, but who bear a peasant subculture and whose kinship and social ties to the countryside remain strong.

The Town subculture is "the way of life of inhabitants of the middle and upper classes in the numerous settlements serving as administrative, market, and religious centers . . . " (Wagley and Harris 1968: 83-84). It is the Town subcultural sector, often with a visibility that belies its numerical

representation in the community, that dominates life in the small towns of the Beni. This sector, composed almost entirely of ranchers and men of commerce (the two frequently coincide), bears a strong urban ethos which is seen in its carefully manicured town plazas and its gala social functions in the local Social Club. There is competition among the towns in assertion of this ethos: residents of one town may note with pride how superior their plaza is in certain particulars to that of another town; or the queen of one town's Social Club may journey with her maidenly entourage to a nearby town to visit her counterpart, there to be feted as an emissary of culture and beauty. The urban ethos also leads those of the Town subculture to make strenuous, often awkward, efforts to emulate the urban patterns of leading cities such as La Paz or Cochabamba in matters of dress and behavior, patterns that often emanate in turn from Europe or North America.

Feelings of "racial" purity as well as superiority vis-à-vis the peasant sector commonly run high among those of the Town subculture, who sometimes think of themselves as blancos ("whites") in contrast to the cambas, or indios ("Indians"). But what is effectively being asserted here is "social race" rather than biological race (see Wagley 1968b: 155-174), for the reality is that considerable miscegenation has occurred in the Beni at virtually all levels of society.

Finally, it is among those individuals of the Town subculture that the economic, political, and power elites are found, a circumstance that lends to that subcultural sector an importance in local economic and political affairs that transcends its numbers in the population. Members of this sector by tradition engage in la polftica ("politics") with an avidity that often erupts into violence in an economic environment where the Government is a major employer and nepotism determines political patronage to a degree that is remarkable even by Bolivian standards.

Most non-peasants in Trinidad by far belong to the Town subculture, not surprising, perhaps, since Trinidad, although departmental capital, was until recent years about as isolated as the small towns and little different from them. But now also a small Metropolitan Upper Class seems to be emerging in Trinidad. This particular subcultural type, "characteristic of the highest socioeconomic strata in the large cities and of the owners of plantations" (Wagley and Harris 1968: 84), includes a few professionals and large ranchers. The line between this subcultural group and that of the Town, however, is in the Beni a hazy one, so that only with difficulty can the class be equated with its counterpart in highland cities such as La Paz and Cochabamba. Members of this group may have studied abroad, their children may have received a year of secondary school in the United States or Europe, or families may maintain a second house in La Paz or Cochabamba. Members

of this class may also occupy the higher administrative posts at the departmental level, less often at the national level.

Using the 1974 native population estimates of Riester (1976: 33; 56-57; 61-62) and unpublished figures from the 1976 census (Bolivia 1976b: 1-3) already cited, some crude estimates of the numerical representation of the various sub-cultural types in the departmental population can be made.<sup>24</sup> Ranking the types in a status hierarchy, at the bottom is the Tribal Indian, called in the region by the terms bárbaro ("barbarian"), salvaje ("savage"), or chori.<sup>25</sup> Numbering from 3,007 to 3,707 individuals, Tribal Indians would account for between 1.8 and 2.2 percent of the population of the Beni. Next up the scale is the Indian Peasant (population 38,707-42,607; 23-25.4%), followed by the Mestizo Peasant (population 89,202-93,101; 53.1-55.4%). The six groups of "Jesuitized" pampean Indians alone make up the bulk of the Indian-Peasant type and account for between 20.6 and 22.3 percent of the population of the department. The Moxos form the largest of these pampean groups. The remainder of the population (population 28,554-37,053; 17-22.1%) consists of the Town sub-cultural type, with a small Metropolitan Upper Class at the apex of the hierarchy.

No discussion of the human setting of the Beni is complete, finally, without at least some mention of the strong regionalist attitudes that so often condition relations between highlander and lowlander. The highlander, who loosely

refers to all lowlanders as cambas, frequently views the Beni as a wild frontier, a land where uncivilized Indians still stalk the jaguar-infested selvas and caymans and serpents everywhere bask ominously in the humid heat. It is no coincidence that miscreants have traditionally fled or been consigned for penance to the Beni, and to the Beni that vanquished and ousted politicians have often taken in order to live as domestic exiles and thus escape the sure reprisals that follow every coup.

Kolla is the term used by the lowlander for the highlander. While the term can apply to any highlander, it is the writer's impression that it applies especially to those individuals with marked native Andean physical features. The Cochabambino, for example, seems to be the kolla par excellence, perhaps because it is with the Cochabamba trader, often a native speaker of Quechua and invariably with marked Andean features, that the average Beniano so frequently encounters as the former wanders about the small towns of the region peddling an assortment of clothes, culinary ware, notions, and packaged foodstuffs.<sup>26</sup> The local stereotype of the kolla demeans him as sullen, withdrawn, squat, dark-skinned, more than slightly bovine, lacking in the social graces, and with an offensive body odor. A local friend of the writer often scolded his young son for misbehavior by calling him kolla in a harsh voice, while a young woman of the White sector of San Ignacio told the writer shortly after his arrival in the



Beni that he was fortunate to be studying "our Indians" instead of the kollas, for the former were "tall, white, robust, and receptive," while the latter were "squat, dark, and withdrawn." Much local humor also centers on the kolla, especially on his ignorance of and clumsy efforts to cope with the rigorous--and for him alien--physical environment of the Beni.

The explanation for such attitudes rests in part on post-Columbian historical relations between the highland and lowland regions of the country. The Beni has never figured more than marginally and fleetingly in the mainstream of national history; indeed, the mainstream itself has been largely defined by highlanders. The Beni has traditionally been viewed as a backwater by governments notoriously highland in character. Held to be rich or poor in accordance with the capricious demand of national and international markets for the region's products, the Beni has been neglected in terms of the distribution of national power and resources.

#### Moxos Province

Carved out of Cercado Province in 1937 by executive decree (decreto supremo), Moxos Province has an area of 33,616 square kilometers and an official 1976 population of 14,896 (Bolivia 1978b: 2).<sup>27</sup> The south and southwestern areas of the province, toward the highly ramate headwaters of the Rivers Apére, Sécure, and Ichoa, are heavily forested, remote, and

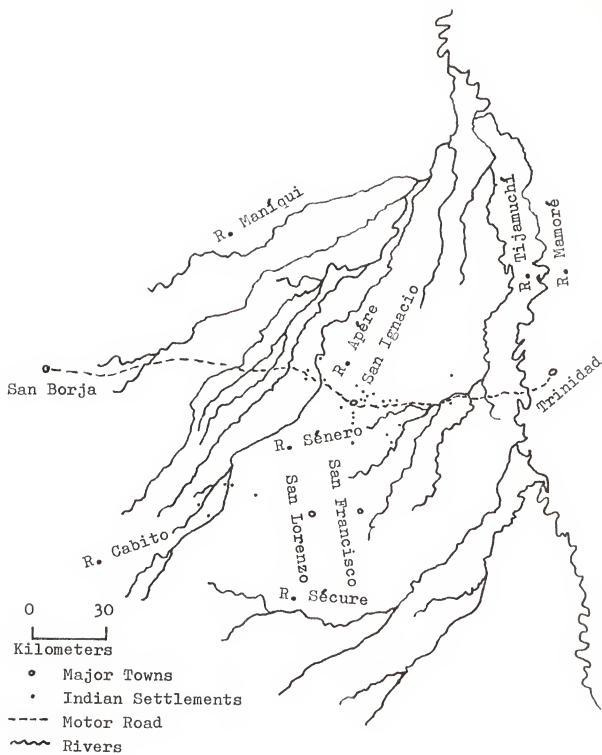


Figure 2  
The San Ignacio Area

very sparsely populated. Forested areas of considerable size exist also in the immediate area of San Ignacio, to the north-east, east, southeast and south; and to the northwest, beginning just beyond nearby Lake Isidoro, a large stretch of forest extends to the River Apére. Numerous peasant settlements and gardens are found in these forests near San Ignacio. The remainder of the province is made up of savannah, or pampa. The pampas to the south of San Ignacio, extending to San Francisco and San Lorenzo and drained by the Tijamuchí and its affluents, are among the finest grazing lands in all the Beni.

Moxos Province is composed of four cantons: San Ignacio, San Francisco, San Lorenzo, and Sécure (Burton 1978: 6). San Ignacio, capital of the province and site of the field research described here, was founded in 1689 as a Jesuit mission town.

According to 1976 census materials (Bolivia 1978: 1-2), the population of the province is distributed over the following categories: San Ignacio (i.e., the provincial capital): 3,000 (20.1%);<sup>28</sup> cantonal seats: 1,331 (8.9%); important settlements: 1,894 (12.7%); and dispersed population: 8,671 (58.2%). Only two cantonal seats, San Lorenzo and San Francisco, account for the above figure, but San Ignacio, the provincial capital, is also a cantonal seat; no seat is shown for the canton of Sécure. The figure for "important settlements" is made up of the following settlements: San Pastor (population 100); Bermeo (population 150); Fátima (population 140); Argentina (population 125); Retiro (population 120);

Pueblo Nuevo (population 100); Santa Rosa del Apére (population 135); Carmen del Cabito (population 150); Santa Rita (population 100); Desengaño (population 644); and Chaguaya (population 130).<sup>29</sup>

Again applying our formula (see Note 24, Chapter 2) to the above census categories, the peasant compliment of the provincial population is calculated at 12,901, or 86.6 percent of the official population. The local director of the 1976 census, a man widely traveled in the province and with a good knowledge of its ethnic composition, estimates that roughly 80 percent of the population is Indian peasant. The difference between the two figures might be taken to represent mestizo peasants. Whatever the mix, it is certain that the peasantry is overwhelmingly Indian and that the Indian population of the province is one of the largest, if not the largest, of any province in the department.

Ignacianos and Trinitarios comprise the two most numerous native groups of the province, followed by Movímas. While most of the latter are found in Yacuma Province, along the lower reaches of the Rivers Yacuma, Rápulo, Matos, and Apére, one large Movíma settlement, Desengaño, on the River Apére, is in Moxos Province. Also, Mojeños (i.e., Ignacianos and Trinitarios) are found in the Movíma settlement of Perú, on the River Apére in Yacuma Province (Riester 1976: 50). The Trinitarios, with an estimated population of 5,000 at ca. 1970 (see Kelm 1971: 233), are probably the most highly

dispersed of the pampean groups. This dispersion began toward the close of the last century, when many Trinitarios in Trinidad responded violently to their plight as forced laborers in the rubber forests to the north and were compelled by Bolivian troops to flee southwestward to San Francisco and San Lorenzo, both now in Moxos Province (Riester 1976: 311-12). Many Trinitarios are settled in these towns today, but the dispersion has continued. The writer encountered numerous Trinitarios living high on the River Apére and its affluents in October of 1978.<sup>30</sup> Many Trinitarios, interspersed with Ignacianos, are found in both Santa Rosa del Apére and Pueblo Nuevo; Carmen, a large settlement sited on the River Cabito, an affluent of the Apére, is composed almost entirely of Trinitarios.<sup>31</sup> The few Trinitarios remaining today in Trinidad live an impoverished existence in the low-lying and flood-prone zone of the town known as Pompei.

The Ignaciano population at ca. 1970 was estimated at 5,000 (see Kelm 1971: 233). The writer's impressions, however, are that this figure is low and that the current population of the group is probably near 7,000. Knowledgeable estimates from San Ignacio put the Indian compliment of the town proper at from 50 to 80 percent of the official 1976 population of 3,000. Most of the remaining Ignacianos reside in at least twenty-seven named zones or settlements dependent on San Ignacio. A land trip made by the writer from San Ignacio south to San Francisco suggests that Ignacianos account for

a very large part of all ranch personnel in that area. But Ignacianos are also scattered widely over the eastern lowlands. A few live with Movimas along the middle and lower reaches of the River Apére. There is a small colony (until recent times much larger) of them in Trinidad, settled mainly, so it seems, in the barrio of San Antonio. The writer found Ignacianos in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, far to the south, when he went there to work with an informant. And Ignacianos in San Ignacio sometimes make casual reference to relatives living in Guayaramerín, in Riberalta, or even in Brazil.

Fifteen of the twenty-seven settlements in which Ignacianos comprise at least a significant<sup>32</sup> portion of the population were accredited with rural corregidores ("magistrates")<sup>33</sup> by the subprefecture in San Ignacio as of 1978, meaning that such settlements were deemed important officially because of the numbers of people living in and about them. Five of the twenty-seven settlements, four of which have corregidores, are located in nearby forest to the east and northeast of San Ignacio. Five more settlements, three with corregidores, are found to the southwest of San Ignacio; three of these are on the River Apére, while a fourth is only about two leagues (leguas)<sup>34</sup> from the river. Three settlements, one with corregidor, are found to the west of town, near the highway to San Borja. And lastly, two settlements, neither with corregidor, are located to the northwest, one in a forested zone just beyond Lake Isidoro, the other considerably beyond on the River Apére.<sup>35</sup>

As is true throughout the Beni, lone individuals or families belonging to one of any number of ethnic groups of the lowlands are apt to be found in the province at any given time. A few families of Yuracaré Indians, for example, were living on the Apére, between Puerto San Borja (on the highway) and the mouth of the Cabito, until traders from San Ignacio began to pressure them to liquidate incurred debts, whereupon they left the area clandestinely just before the writer ascended the river in 1978. A family or two of "Yuras" also reside just to the south of San Ignacio. In his travels among Ignacianos and Trinitarios, the writer often encountered Movímas; and an occasional Chimán<sup>36</sup> is to be found living with Ignacianos and Trinitarios in and about Santa Rosa del Apére and other upriver settlements.

Although statistics are scant and of questionable reliability, there is still good evidence of a demographic dynamic at play in the province over the past nearly thirty years. The official 1976 figure of 14,896 for the population of the province, for example, represents an increase of 85.3 percent over the official 1950 figure (Bolivia 1978: 9) of 8,038. The director of the Census of the Americas of 1950 recalls a figure of 1,700 people for San Ignacio proper in that year; the 1976 town population figure of 3,000 represents a population increase of 76.5 percent over the 1950 figure. Turning to the Indian sector, the 1974 population estimate by Riester (1976: 57) of between 15,000 and 17,000 for the

Mojeños (i.e., Ignacianos and Trinitarios) contrasts sharply with the official 1950 census figure (Muñoz Reyes 1977: 218) of 4,000 for the same group. Respecting the Ignacianos, the writer was often told by older informants that there are now more Ignacianos than before 1950 and that they are more dispersed. In the same context, these informants often noted that there are now gardens everywhere near San Ignacio, that high-growth forest has been replaced by low-growth forest (barbecho) near town, and that there is a scarcity of wild game in the area.



## Notes to Chapter II

<sup>1</sup>Most of the material on general physiography in this section was taken from Denevan (1966), Muñoz-Reyes (1977), and Osborne (1964).

<sup>2</sup>Savannah in the Beni is termed pampa, a Quechua word. Forest of limited extent within the llanos area is referred to as monte, but high forest found in large tracts anywhere, but especially that toward the headwaters of the numerous rivers to the west, is often called montaña. This latter term stresses such attributes as greater tree height and girth, greater canopy density, and the infrequency of human penetration.

<sup>3</sup>Islas are sometimes called rodeos de ganado ("cattle corrals") since cattle often gather on them to sleep and feed during the rainy season, a time when much of the pampa is flooded.

<sup>4</sup>The rains that fall along the eastern slopes of the cordillera account for the burden of the flood waters. Such rains in the serranía, or highlands, interestingly, can swell rivers in the southwest of the Beni during the local winter dry season. The River Sénoro, just to the south of San Ignacio, was full when the writer crossed it in early August of 1978; and some local people well remember when a few years ago the River Apére, to the west of San Ignacio, poured waters onto the surrounding pampas in early September, forcing ranchers to quickly move their cattle to higher ground.

<sup>5</sup>Three terms are in common use locally to denote these depressions. Curiches, the lowest of the depressions, retain running water year round and support a variety of tall grasses and sedges. Nearly always found on the pampas, curiches provide water and forage for cattle in the dry season. Denevan (1966: 8) notes that meander cutoffs along the rivers are sometimes also called curiches. Bajíos, only slightly higher than curiches and also found on the pampas, are occasionally areas of some extent, flat, scrubless, and often with shallow standing water at mid-August, a time when cattle gather there to feed on the low grasses. Bajuras, found in monte and chaparral zones, are depressions of limited extent that are usually dry to mildly wet at the height of the dry season.

<sup>6</sup>According to Orbigny (1845: 1), the term "Beni" means "wind" in Tacana, a native language of the Oriente.

<sup>7</sup>One of these surazos struck the area of San Ignacio during the writer's stay in early August of 1978, and dawn temperatures of 5°C were recorded. Denevan (1966: 11) says that surface winds of up to sixty miles per hour have been reported.

<sup>8</sup>Detailed analytical data on physical and chemical properties of soils from numerous sites in the region appear in Cochrane (1973). The work also provides a useful bibliography of soil studies realized in Bolivia from 1940 to 1971.

<sup>9</sup>Latin binomials for the floral types here mentioned were taken from Muñoz-Reyes (1977: 113-15), Kempff Mercado (1976), Unzueta (1975: 121-26), and Cochrane (1973: 794-97).

<sup>10</sup>Native peoples were driving game across the pampas toward ambushes by grass fires when the Spaniards arrived (Métraux 1942: 59).

<sup>11</sup>The term can apply either to the mat alone or to the entire complex of depression cum mat. Neither man nor cattle dare penetrate such areas for fear of becoming marooned in the dense tangle of aquatic growth and often ensnaringly bland bottoms of such depressions. Yomomos are notorious for sustaining a prolific aquatic fauna, chief of which is the dreaded sicuri (Eunectes), or water boa (anaconda).

<sup>12</sup>The Chimanes plant a variety of chuchfo which they use for arrow shafts.

<sup>13</sup>These boundaries, though, can also be abrupt. According to Ignacianos, a chaparral zone represents an incipient advance of forest over pampa and will eventually be plenary forest. Older Ignacianos are quick to point to forested areas that were pampa during their childhood, especially in the vicinity of San Ignacio. The frequency with which such comments were made to the writer during his movements about the province suggests that on balance perhaps there has been an advance of forest over pampa in recent times. In this Muñoz-Reyes concurs (1977: 45).

<sup>14</sup>Latin binomials for faunal types mentioned here are taken from Muñoz-Reyes (1977: 131-39) and Gilmore (1963: 345-464).

<sup>15</sup>The lagarto ("Lizzard") is not a true lizzard but rather a small cayman, or crocodile (Muñoz-Reyes 1977: 138).

<sup>16</sup>Due to the obstacles of difficult terrain, poor communications, and a chronic lack of resources to conduct census operations, all such official figures, though especially those from the remote eastern regions, must be taken cum grano salis.

<sup>17</sup> Accordingly, those cities are not included in the figures to follow. It should be noted, however, that Trinidad is capital of Cercado Province, Riberalta of Vaca Díez; and that Guayaramerín is a cantonal seat. Also, nearly all of the provincial capitals happen to be cantonal seats as well, though the corresponding statistical categories are here made mutually exclusive by including such dual designates in the category for provincial capitals only.

<sup>18</sup> The criteria for establishing the official categories are by no means clear. In terms of size, the average population of "cantonal seats" is 521 (N = 38) while that of "important settlements" is 190 (N = 55). "Dispersed population" includes "ranch personnel, rubber collectors, Brazil-nut collectors, lone riverine dwellers, lone pampa dwellers, and others" (Bolivia 1978b: 3; my translation). It must be emphasized that the category "important settlements" in no wise includes all named settlements.

<sup>19</sup> Recent years have witnessed a thriving contraband trade in cattle between Bolivia and Brazil, where Beni ranchers have often been paid in United States dollars. Cattle were commonly taken down the Mamoré on barges and crossed into Brazil near Guayaramerín. According to the writer's sources, this trade has now slowed to a trickle and cattle are even being exported to Brazil under a recent agreement between the two governments.

<sup>20</sup> Apart from the often numerous stores, usually converted home fronts, most every house (of the non-peasant sector) seems to have something for sale.

<sup>21</sup> Such peoples are found in the departments of Tarija, Santa Cruz, Beni, and Pando, as well as in the lowland eastern regions of the departments of Cochabamba, Chuquisaca and La Paz. Generally, native population estimates for the Oriente, or eastern lowlands of the country, include non-Andean indigenous peoples native to the departments indicated above even though by convention not all of those departments are held to be part of the Oriente.

<sup>22</sup> Riester also discusses in greater detail the reliability of the various estimates just cited as well as of other estimates not here cited (Riester 1976: 34; 56-57; 62-63).

<sup>23</sup> In the original paper by Wagley and Harris just cited, the Indian Peasant and Mestizo Peasant types are called respectively "Modern Indian" and "Peasant." The substitution made here accords with a subsequent paper by Wagley (1968a: 123) in which he agrees with Eric Wolf (1955: 452-71) that at least two kinds of peasants should be recognized--Indian and mestizo--and then proceeds to equate these to the two types

of the original typology in the manner indicated above. In the Wolf scheme, Indian and mestizo types are described by the kinds of communities in which they live, "closed" and "open" respectively.

24. The native ethnic groups of the Beni, taken from a map provided by Reister (1976: 33), and their corresponding 1974 population estimates (Reister 1976: 56-57; 61-62) are as follows: Moré (140), Chácobo (169), Cavineña (800), Reyesano (1,000-1,200), Chimán (2,000-2,500), Movima (10,000), Mojo (15,000-17,000), Siriono (800), Guarayo (7,000-8,000), Canichana (500), Itonama (4,000-5,000), Baure (4,000), Jora (5), and Cayuvava (700-900). Since the Siriono and Guarayo are in both the Beni and Santa Cruz Departments, the writer adjusted those figures by estimating the Beni Siriono at between 400 and 600, and the Beni Guarayo at between 1,500 and 2,000. Population estimates for the various subcultural types were then computed as follows: Tribal Indians were figured to be about half of the non-pampeans population above. The remaining half of the non-pampeans and all of the pampean groups are Indian Peasants; also, a factor of 1,000 to 1,500 native peasants is added to the category to account for wandering members of a variety of non-Beni groups, such as Yuracarés, who would likely be settled in the Beni at any given time. Then calculations were made for the peasant compliments of "dispersed population," "important settlements," "catal seats," "provincial capitals," and the three "cities" (i.e., Trinidad, Guayaramerín, and Riberalta) at the estimated rates of 95, 95, 80, 70, and 60 percent respectively. Thus was the total peasant population of the Beni arrived at. The figure for Mestizo Peasants is simply the total peasant figure less the Indian-Peasant figure. The remainder of the population, then, equivalent to the total departmental population figure less the sum of the figures for the three types already calculated, consists of members of the Town and incipient Metropolitan-Upper-Class types. This method is admittedly very crude, depending as it does on a series of estimates and questionable population counts, but at least the percentages arrived at strike the writer as not unrealistic for the Beni.

25. The term chori can also refer exclusively to the Siriono.

26. The Beni, in contrast to Santa Cruz Department, has not to date been a focus for the resettlement of highland or foreign populations, though it is currently rumored in government circles in La Paz that the department might receive such populations in the near future.

27 This figure may be far too low. The director of the 1976 census for the province, citing at least on entire zone that was omitted from the count and noting that some individuals slated to work in the count became ill and could not, estimates that the true population figure is 25 to 50 percent higher than the reported one. If so, the population of the province could fall between 18,620 and 22,344. This note, then, is a caveat for all evaluations of official census figures for the Beni.

28 According to the local director of the 1976 census, this figure is the "stable population" of San Ignacio and refers to the population of the town proper (the radio urbano, or "urban radius," is the area within a circle of radius one kilometer from the plaza; the "stable population" is well within this radius). The director estimates that roughly 3,000 more people, virtually all Indian, live within easy commuting distance of San Ignacio and are in the town every second day or so. Some of these individuals maintain houses in San Ignacio as well as at their garden sites. For the census count, some Ignacianos who maintain residences in both San Ignacio and an outlying settlement left the town for that settlement in order to underscore its importance since the government's decision of whether to locate a school or sanitary post in a particular settlement depends in part on the size of the resident population. And other Ignacianos, not understanding why they were told by radio to remain in their houses on the day appointed for the census, fled into the forest in fear.

29 At least two of the settlements, Pueblo Nuevo and Carmen del Cabito, may technically be in Yacuma Province. Published country maps and the writer's knowledge of the terrain suggest this. But the map that accurately locates land forms and administrative boundaries in this remote region is yet to be made (and the Beni-Cochabamba boundary is still under dispute). The settlements in question, however, are administratively dependent on San Ignacio de Moxos and are thus by convention held to belong to that province.

30 True, Trinitarios are highly dispersed and physically divorced from the town of Trinidad, but in some sense no less "Trinitario" for all that. This point was brought home to the writer when he talked with a Trinitario of middle age in Carmen del Cabito. In response to the writer's queries, the man related that he was Trinitario, that he was born in Santa Ana de Yacuma, and that he had roamed widely over the years. It later emerged that he had never been in Trinidad, though at the time he was seeking to go there in the company of an itinerant merchant as the latter's helper in order to see the town. The most important feast day in the village of Carmen, however, is July 16, day of Our Lady of Carmen, not June 5,

day of the Holy Trinity. And so it seems to be with other Trinitario settlements.

Whites (as well as some Ignacianos) in San Ignacio, parenthetically, invariably describe Trinitarios as ariscos ("shy") and traicioneros ("treacherous") in contrasting them with Ignacianos. The writer was more than once warned to beware of them when travelling in the remoter areas. The history of contacts between Trinitarios and Whites probably explains the attitudes held by each group vis-à-vis the other. It frequently struck the writer that Trinitarios were more cautious and less trusting in their dealings with Whites than were Ignacianos.

<sup>31</sup>The Trinitarios of Carmen del Cabito had begun to disperse once more when the writer visited the settlement for the second time in early November of 1978 (first visit in July of 1976). The cacique and others were talking of moving the settlement westward since the nearby forest had been hunted out and meat was scarce. Also, White ranchers, who have occupied the nearby pampas in recent years, were felt by many to pose a threat.

<sup>32</sup>It is difficult here to quantify "significant." The writer visited some of the settlements, but had to rely on informants for knowledge of the existence, location, and relative ethnic composition of most of the settlements. All but half a dozen or thereabouts, however, are overwhelmingly Ignaciano, and the remainder are probably from 25 to 50 percent so.

<sup>33</sup>A total of only seventeen corregidores de campo (excluding the corregidor in San Ignacio proper) were accredited as of May, 1978, to settlements that administratively depend directly on San Ignacio. This figure does not necessarily represent the total for all of Moxos Province--e.g., San Lorenzo and San Francisco would presumably also have such dependent settlements with accredited corregidores de campo.

<sup>34</sup>The local convention is to express distance as a function of time. Accordingly, one legua is the distance traversed in an hour by a man on foot (dry season).

<sup>35</sup>The settlements (or settled zones) by name are: in nearby forest to the east and northeast of San Ignacio: Santa Rita, Chontal, Litoral, Bella Brisa, San José del Algodonal (or San José del Mesón); to the east-northeast, near the highway to Trinidad: Chajaríco, Villa Esperanza, Búri, Argentina, Fátima; to the south and southeast of San Ignacio: Santiago de Bowles, San Ignacito, Victoria, Flores Coloradas, Achanequére, Yaperéji, Florida; to the southwest: Monte Grande,

Santa Rosa del Apére (or Puerto Suárez), Pueblo Nuevo, Buen Retiro, Pallar; to the west, near the highway to San Borja: Puerto San Borja, Moserúnas, Chevejecúre; and to the north-west of San Ignacio: Mercedes, Máture.

<sup>36</sup>The writer encountered a dozen or so highly dispersed Chimán households in 1978, located at just under a dry-season treck of two days to the west of Carmen del Cabito, beyond the abandoned Jesuit mission town of San José, on affluents of the Cabito (itself an affluent of the Apére). The Chimanes and Trinitarios of the Carmen area have been in contact, at least for trade (e.g., the Chimanes give stones for steel edgetools), since before 1950; and a few Chimanes speak some Trinitario, are vaguely linked to Trinitarios through ties of compadrazgo (which seem to link trading partners), or have taken Trinitaria wives. Today, two White comerciantes are entering this Chimán area to trade steel edgetools and cotton cloth for the skins and pelts of felines and other wild fauna. Otherwise, these Chimanes remain very unacculturated to Hispanic ways: they speak no Spanish, use the bow-and-arrow to hunt instead of firearms, and still often wear bark-cloth clothing.

### CHAPTER III HISTORY

#### Early European Exploration and Conquest

The trans-Andean lowlands to the east of Cuzco and north of Paraguay were held since early Conquest times to be the site of a fabulous kingdom rich in silver and gold. This kingdom of El Dorado in the land of the "Chunchos," or Indians of the eastern lowlands, came to be known after the name of its supposed ruler, the Gran Moxo, or Gran Paititi. It was the lure of precious metals that impelled the Spaniards on a course westward and northward from Buenos Aires and led to the progressive founding of a series of settlements, each serving in turn as a *pied-à-terre* for the next advance, or entrada ("entry"). The route led from Buenos Aires to Asunción (founded in 1540) on the River Paraguay, thence into the lowlands of what is today southeastern Bolivia. It was thus that Santa Cruz de la Sierra was founded in 1561 by Ñuflo de Chávez, a former lieutenant of Domingo Martínez de Irala, governor of Paraguay. Just prior to the founding of Santa Cruz, the Viceroy of Peru officially declared the eastern lowlands of what is today Bolivia a gobernación, or administrative unit, to be called "Moxos" and to be administered by his son, García Hurtado de Mendoza. Because the son was then absent, Ñuflo de Chávez was chosen as his representative and



charged with governing the new creation (Sanabria 1973a: 17, 20-22). Santa Cruz de la Sierra<sup>1</sup> was to be an important base for the exploratory entradas to the north over the next century.

Not all of the expeditions to Moxos originated in Santa Cruz, however. One expedition departed from Cuzco for the land of the Chunchos as early as 1539, before the founding of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, and in the same year another expedition from Cuzco reached Reyes, later a Jesuit mission settlement and today a cattle town at the western edge of the Beni plains. Exploratory expeditions left Cochabamba in 1562 and 1564, the latter led by Diego Aleman. Among the clerics who entered the lowlands from highland cities was Vázquez de Urrea, a carmelite who explored in the area now the Pando Department between 1560 and 1568. Cabello de Balboa, a curate, headed north from La Paz in 1594, passing through Apolobamba en route to the land of the Chunchos (Vásquez Machicado et al. 1963: 111-114). But these efforts and entradas notwithstanding, the real thrust--and the best documented--into the eastern lowlands of the Beni emanated from Santa Cruz de la Sierra.

Excursions to the north were made throughout the first century following the founding of Santa Cruz; no less than twenty exploratory expeditions were mounted between 1600 and 1650, some by governors of Santa Cruz, others by private individuals of economic means (Sanabria 1973a: 41). During the late sixteenth century, Lorenzo Suárez de Figueroa,

governor of Santa Cruz from 1581 to 1595, organized two expeditions (Vázquez Machicado et al. 1963: 140), the first of which crossed the northwestern part of Chiquitos between 1580 and 1583 and encountered the Timbúes, probably a Moxos subgroup (Métraux 1942: 56). The second expedition, mounted in 1595 and led by Juan de Torres Palomilli, descended the Río Grande (River Guapay) and reached the Motilones, for certain a Moxos subgroup (Métraux 1942: 56). Accompanying this latter expedition was Father Jerónimo de Andiñ, the first Jesuit to make contact with the Moxos (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 11).<sup>2</sup> Another governor of Santa Cruz, Juan Mendoza Mate de Luna, entered the land of the Moxos via the Río Grande in 1603 and founded a small and short-lived settlement on that river which he called Trinidad (Métraux 1942: 57). Gonzalo de Solís Holguín, also a governor of Santa Cruz, led two expeditions to the Moxos and was among them during 1622 and 1623 (Métraux 1942: 57; Vázquez Machicado et al. 1963: 140).

All of the pre-Jesuit entradas to the Moxos during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were failures in the sense that no permanent Spanish colonies were established in the area owing to the asperities of climate and terrain, the attacks of hostile Indians, and deprivations and mutinies among would-be colonists and soldiers. By 1668, the year<sup>4</sup> frequently cited (e.g., Astraín 1920: 542-43) for the beginning of the apostolic enterprise of the Jesuits in Moxos,<sup>3</sup> hopes of finding the metallic riches of Paititi had been

virtually abandoned and the way was open for a different sort of conquest.

### Late Pre-Jesuit Moxos

Gleaned from the reports of early explorers and missionaries, data on the aboriginal groups of Moxos are relatively sparse and do not permit the drawing of a lucid picture of native society and culture on the eve of European conquest. There is evidence, however, that some of the groups, including the Moxos, were organized along the lines of chiefdoms, or societies characterized by "intervillage federation" (Steward and Faron 1959: 252-57; Steward 1963: 1-41).<sup>4</sup> It is hoped that future archival research, especially in the Jesuit archives in Rome, will shed further light on this period, for only then can the process by which the Jesuits "reduced" Tribal Indians to the socio-cultural form of the mission town be fully understood. The brief data to follow were taken from works by Métraux (1942: 53-79) and Denevan (1966: 45-49) since these sources contain material abstracted and synthesized from the first European accounts known.

According to Father Castillo (Métraux 1942: 54), an early missionary among the Moxos proper, that linguistic group numbered about 6,000 and was settled in some seventy villages with an average population of sixty to eighty persons per village. After analyzing several of the early reports, Métraux concludes that the group resided aboriginally in the

southwestern part of the mission province (i.e., of the now Beni Department), where "their numerous villages were scattered on nonflooded stretches near the upper Mamoré, Sécure, Apére, and Tijamuchí Rivers" (Métraux 1942: 55). Father Marbán (Denevan 1966: 58), speaking of the province in general, comments on the density of native villages, noting that five or six villages might be encountered every five or six leagues (i.e., 25-30 km.). Some of the villages of the province seem to have been quite large, having as many as 400 houses; Cayuvava villages were reported with as many as 2,000 people. Denevan concludes that most villages of the province "had around 20 houses and probably 100 people or less" (Denevan 1966: 58). He notes also that savannah villages "were characterized by great diversity in size, site, permanency, organization, and protective mechanisms against flooding" (Denevan 1966: 58).

Following Father Castillo and using the Latin binomials supplied by Denevan (1966: 99), native crops of the savannah tribes included yuca ("sweet manioc," Manihot esculenta), maíz ("corn," Zea mays), frijoles (probably the kidney bean, Phaseolus vulgaris), zapallo ("squash," Cucurbita), papaya ("papaya," Carica papaya probably), ají ("red pepper," Capsicum), algodón ("cotton," Gossypium barbabense), arrachacha (Arracacia xanthorrhiza), tabáco ("tobacco," Nicotiana tabacum probably), and the plátano ("plantain," Musa paradisiaca normalis). As already noted, the Moxos raised a sugarcane in small quantities to eat as a delicacy (Métraux 1942: 59).

The Moxos cleared in flood-free forest,<sup>5</sup> first removing the underbrush toward the end of August and then cutting the bases of large trees with stone axes and the aid of fire. The felled growth was then burned over. Corn was sown in early October, placing the seeds in holes made by digging sticks, and was ready for harvest in two months. Manioc was planted in September or October and ready for harvest in February. Spaniards of the Solís Holguín expedition marvelled at the size of Moxo gardens; areas planted to manioc seem to have been especially large (Métraux 1942: 59).

Game were taken from both savannah and forest, using distinctive techniques for the respective environments (Métraux 1942: 59-60). Monkeys and birds were hunted by individuals in the forest, whereas on the pampas groups of men led by a cacique ("chief"), with absolute authority for the occasion, pursued herds of deer communally using trained dogs or driving them with grass fires. In the flood season, hunters would enter the forested isla refuges from various sides with dogs and making much noise, thus driving the game, especially deer, out of the forest to the water's edge, where other hunters awaited in canoes. The bow-and-arrow, the blowgun, and the spear (with spear thrower) were all used for hunting. Bolas were also present, though they may have been used only for war.

Fish in the area were plentiful, especially once the flood waters receded, and were taken in large quantities with

cudgels, spears, and arrows. Stupefacients were used in the lakes, and weirs and fish traps were placed at the outlets of lakes. Barriers were sometimes made of weeds and pushed toward the shore of a lake, thus trapping the fish and enabling them to be caught by hand.

▲ Moxo villages were characterized by streets and plazas and had three kinds of structures: houses, kitchens, and drinking places (bebederos) (Denevan 1966: 59). Marbán noted that two to three families typically shared a house, and Castillo observed that each house had space for six to eight cotton hammocks for sleeping. According to Eder, each house contained a family of up to twelve people (Denevan 1966: 60).

★ Information on aboriginal social organization is sparse, though the fact that Moxo villages were often connected by causeways would seem to indicate some sort of supra-village organization (Denevan 1966: 46). On balance, however, information from early European reports suggests that the numerous villages were largely autonomous. According to Father Orellana (Métraux 1942: 69), each village yearly elected a chief whose authority was always subject to the good will of the villagers. Métraux, however, accepts this report with some reservation since the position of headmen among the Bauré, a people whose culture differed little from that of the Moxos, was quite different. There, chiefs formed an aristocracy since a chief's first wife had to be the daughter of another chief and only the son by such a woman could succeed to the chieftancy. Further, Bauré chiefs, provisioned by their subjects, did no work and enjoyed great power checked only somewhat by

older men who represented the community. Chiefs could impose the death sentence, decided when a village was to be moved, and exercised absolute authority during war and hunting expeditions (Métraux 1942: 69). The characteristics of settlement pattern and social organization, especially of the Bauré, together with other cultural features presumably led Steward and Faron (1959: 254-57) to classify the Moxo and Bauré as "Tropical-Forest Chiefdoms."

The deities of the Moxo were numerous. To quote Father Eguiluz, there were deities "particular to one village, others common to all of them. Some of their gods were married, others were single. Each one had distinct functions and activities. Some presided over water and fish, some over clouds and lightning, some over the crops, some over war, and some over jaguars" (Métraux 1942: 74). There were spirits of the forests, of the rivers, of the lakes, and of the dead. Greatly feared by the Moxo was the Jaguar Spirit, which was often propitiated by offerings of food and drink. Around this spirit centered a cult, and those wounded by a jaguar acquired prestige and usually became shamans (Métraux 1942: 74).

In each Moxo village were what the missionaries called bebederos, or "drinking houses." There, food and chicha ("native beer") were offered to the deities and native priests conducted public rituals, always attended by the drinking of vast quantities of chicha (Métraux 1942: 75).

Whether true priests existed among the Moxo is not clear. Eder draws no terminological distinction among individuals who intervened with the supernatural, but Castillo clearly distinguishes between the "medicine men who cured diseases and were blessed with the power of seeing and extracting invisible serpents," and the ceremonial priests "who were encharged of the sacrifices and prayers and fasted on behalf of the whole community" (Métraux 1942: 77). Denevan speaks of a "priest and shaman class," but notes that it is not known whether priests were full- or only part-time specialists (Denevan 1966: 46).

The Moxo were directly engaged in commercial relations with the Chiriguano in the area of Santa Cruz and with the Mosestén of the forests well to the west and northwest. Moxo traders returned with salt from the Chiriguano (Denevan 1966: 47), and with salt, beads, and knives from the Mosestén (Métraux 1942: 78-79).

It is with the kinds of societies just described imperfectly, then, that the Jesuits formed their mission towns. The data presented suggest considerable variation in regional social complexity, so that any facile generalizations about a shift in such complexity between the pre-Jesuit and Jesuit periods are chancy. Whatever forms pre-Jesuit native society may have taken, those forms gave way to that of the mission town during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.



### The Jesuit Period

The Jesuit period in Moxos was a critical one, for many of the cultural and settlement patterns, technologies, and economic forms which constitute the parameters of human life in the Beni today derive from that era. Aboriginal "levels of socio-cultural integration" were replaced by the level of the mission town, and the Tribal Indian, at least of the pampas, was transformed into the Modern Indian, or what would become the Indian Peasant soon after the departure of the Jesuits from Moxos in 1768.

The Moxos were ascending the Río Grande to trade cotton cloth for steel tools with Chiriguano in the area of Santa Cruz at mid-seventeenth century (Métraux 1942: 57), and some were entering the town, where they obtained items such as beads, earrings, and scissors from Spaniards (Astrafn 1920: 542-43).<sup>6</sup> Juan de Soto, a Jesuit lay brother who served as medic at the residency of the Society in Santa Cruz, established relations with some Moxos who were in the town and subsequently accompanied them to their villages. He then returned to Santa Cruz to report that the Moxos were docile, hospitable, and disposed to receive Spaniards (Astrafn 1920: 542-43). Shortly thereafter, a group of Moxos arrived in Santa Cruz to request Spanish military assistance in a war that they were waging against the Cañacures. Since there was an opportunity both to solidify relations with the Moxos and to procure Indian

captives, an expedition was mounted under the command of Juan de la Hoz Otálora which entered the land of the Moxos in 1668. With the expedition were Juan de Soto and Father José Bermudo from the Society's residency in Santa Cruz (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 17-18).

After eight months among the Moxos, Father Bermudo sent word to the provincial in Lima that the Moxos were a tractable people desirous of having priests among them. Having already decided to promote missionary endeavors among the Moxos, the provincial had dispatched Father Julian de Aller from Chuquisaca (Sucre) to Moxos with the rank of superior of the new mission. Aller arrived at the small base of Trinidad<sup>7</sup> in 1668, where he encountered Father Bermudo. But relations between the Moxos and the Spaniards soon grew strained, probably because of the behavior of the Spanish soldiers present, and the party abandoned the settlement when they realized that their lives were in danger (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 19-21).

Undaunted by a seeming reversal in Moxos-Spanish relations, the Society continued to pursue with fervor the idea of a mission among the Indians. Father Hernando Cavero, then Provincial of Peru, decided to send to Moxos Fathers Pedro Marbán and Cipriano Barace, and Lay Brother José del Castillo. Marbán was named superior of the mission and made independent of the superior of the Jesuit residency in Santa Cruz.<sup>8</sup> Ordered to enter without Spanish soldiers, the three men were charged with exploring the area of the Moxos with a view to

later reporting to the provincial in Lima. The trio entered Moxos in 1675 and after several months of explorations among native groups, Castillo was sent to Lima with a report for the provincial (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 21-26).

Castillo returned from Lima, arriving in Moxos at about the same time as Fathers Clemente de Igarza and Luis Sotelo, both sent from Lima to further assist in the work of reconnaissance, the latter in the capacity of visitador ("inspector"). The team was to prepare another report for the provincial, giving special attention to the potential of the area as a full-blown mission province. The report was completed in 1678 and forwarded to Lima (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 26-27).

Meanwhile, Marbán and Castillo remained at the new base settlement, the former continuing to study the Moxos language (see Note 1).<sup>9</sup> The provincial's reaction to the report was evidently favorable, for Fathers Antonio de Orellana and José de Vega arrived at the Moxos base as reinforcements in 1682. They carried authorization from the provincial to baptize those Moxos who had received instruction in the Christian doctrine. It was thus that this base settlement, consisting of four native parcialidades ("groups," or "pueblos") and given the name Loreto, became the first Jesuit mission town of Moxos in 1682. There were more than 500 baptized Indians living at the mission in that year, a number which grew to 750 the following year (excluding those born during the year), when three more parcialidades were added to the mission.

Loreto continued to expand and cattle, the first to enter Moxos, were brought to the mission from Santa Cruz by Father Barace. But flooding, a problem that was to beset the several mission towns throughout the Jesuit period, forced the relocation of Loreto to a point further north in 1684 (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 26-30).

Trinidad, second of the mission towns, was founded in 1687 by Father Barace on the Río Grande twelve leagues to the north of Loreto. Mayumana Indians were placed in the mission and instructed in the Moxo language. As with Loreto, seasonal flooding forced successive relocations of the town (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 35).

Reinforcements were soon requested of the provincial in Lima to further expand the apostolic enterprise. The third mission, San Ignacio de Loyola, site of the current study, was founded in 1689 by Father Orellana, assisted by Father Juan de Espejo and lay brother Alvaro de Mendoza. The town was first sited on the banks of the River Sénero, fourteen leagues to the west of Trinidad and about 12.5 kilometers to the southwest of its current location.<sup>10</sup> Natives for the mission, Puruanas and Cañacures, were gathered from the nearby pampas and instructed in the Moxo language. The new mission grew quickly, for in 1691, when a census was conducted in conjunction with the visita of Governor Benito de Ribera y Quiroga, 3,041 Indians resided in the town, 722 of whom had received baptism. The report of the visita also comments on the heavy

native population in the area of the mission (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 35-36).

San Javier, founded in 1691 near where the Tijamuchí enters the Mamoré, began with 500 Christian Indians taken from Trinidad, and another 2,000 recruited from among the Barues, Tapacuras, and Guarayos (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 36-37). Founded in 1691 at the foot of the cordillera and sixteen leagues to the west of San Ignacio, the mission of San José was formed with a nucleus of three parcialidades of Moxos to which were added Churimas and some Chiquitos (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 37). This area had only recently been explored by Jesuits in search of a route to Cochabamba which would make unnecessary the greatly circuitous entry to the province from the highlands via Santa Cruz de la Sierra.

San Borja, sixth of the Moxos missions, was founded among the Churimanas in 1693 by Fathers Francisco de Borja and Ignacio de Sotomayor in the lower reaches of the cordillera near the River Maníque, about twelve leagues to the northwest of San José. Father Juan de Espejo attempted earlier in the same year to found a mission among this numerous group, but the charges very soon abandoned the settlement (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 38-39).

The town of San Pedro was founded among Canisianos in 1697 on the banks of the Mamoré, about fourteen leagues to the north of San Javier. It later became capital of the mission province and residence of the superior, thus replacing Loreto

(Vargas Ugarte 1964: 42). The eighth mission, San Luis, was founded in 1698 with Movimas and a few Erirunas. Beset with epidemic disease (pestes), the settlement was subsequently disbanded and the surviving charges taken to other towns (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 43).

Well to the east of the Mamoré, toward the River Iténez (Guaporé), Father Orellana, who replaced Father Marbán as superior in 1700, ordered in 1708 that three missions--Concepción, San Joaquín, and San Martín--be founded among the Baures and sited on affluents of the river also called by that name (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 63-64). Earlier attempts to missionize this numerous group were met with violence; Father Cipriano Barace was killed when he went among them in 1702 (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 58-59).

Exaltación and Santa Ana were founded among the Cayubabas in 1709, on the banks of the Mamoré. The town of Reyes, at the western edge of the pampas, emerged in 1710; it and San Pablo, which had been founded in 1703 but would be abandoned in 1758 and the charges removed to San Borja (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 60-61), were the most northerly of the missions (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 82).

The following years saw the emergence of yet other missions, among them Magdalena, founded among the Baures in 1720 on the River Ubai (San Miguel) (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 83). No new missions were founded during the period of about twenty years prior to the expulsion of the Society in 1767,

but the preceding eighty years witnessed the creation of more than twenty-five towns, albeit some of only brief duration (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 102; 112-114).

By 1751 the province was divided into three sectors: Pampas, the area occupied by the towns to the west of the River Mamoré; Mamoré, the area occupied by those towns located along the trunk of the River Mamoré; and Baures, the area to the east, between the Mamoré and the Iténez. Least populous of the three sectors was Pampas, an area with severe drainage problems (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 107).

Governor Argamosa of Santa Cruz, who visited Moxos in 1727, reported for the province a total of twenty-one towns in which 35,250 Indians resided (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 97). The provincial of Peru, in a letter to the viceroy in 1747, reported Moxos to consist of twenty-one towns in which forty-six priests and lay brothers labored among 33,270 native charges (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 99).

Many of the policies and organizational lineaments which governed mission life in Moxos after 1700 were set forth by Father Diego Francisco Altamirano, who arrived in Loreto from Lima in that year in quality of visitador. After visiting various of the mission settlements, Altamirano prepared a report (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 47-49) on how to best promote the mission effort. He recommended first that the Moxo language be generalized in the mission towns to facilitate both the instructional efforts of the fathers and intra- as well as

inter-settlement communication. To that end, Father Marbán returned to Lima with Altamirano to assist in the preparation for publication of his Moxo grammar (see Note 9, Chapter 3). Altamirano further recommended that the Indians be instructed in Spanish urban political life, and that cabildos ("town councils"), with their various cargos ("offices") filled by Indians, be instituted in each of the mission towns. It was recommended also that certain non-native crops be introduced, such as wheat, grapevines, rice, and sugarcane, and that the charges be taught the use of European agricultural tools and techniques such as the ox-drawn plow.<sup>11</sup> The cultivation of cotton, a native crop, was to be expanded in order to provide garments for the Indians, some groups of which by custom went nude. Last of all, Altamirano advised that selected Indians be taught such manual arts as carpentry, masonry, and smithery in order to reduce the need for European lay assistants in the missions.

While the Moxo language was spoken widely in the southern-most missions of the province, the seeming goal to generalize it throughout the mission system was never realized. According to a report by Governor Ribera in 1792, the following languages were spoken in the indicated missions (Parejas 1976: 77): Canichano in San Pedro, the capital; Moxo in Loreto, Trinidad, and San Ignacio (see Note 1, Chapter 1); Cayubaba in Exaltación; Movima in Santa Ana and San Borja; Itonama in Magdalena; and Baure in Concepción de San Joaquín.



Administered entirely by Jesuits, Moxos Province was closed to Spanish secular activity, and movement to and from the province was rigidly controlled by the fathers. Residing in the province was a superioe, chief executive of mission operations, while in each town were two priests, one charged with material management and mundane affaris, the other with spiritual matters (Parejas 1976: 37). Native society in each of the towns was divided into two sectors, the familias ("familias") and the pueblo en general ("general public"). The former was composed of artisans of the various craft industries instituted by the Jesuits, the later of Indians who exercised only menial or service occupations. There was no social movement between the two sectors (Parejas 1976: 37-38).

Absolute authority in the towns was exercised by the priests. Receiving orders from the priests was the cacique, head of the Indian cabildo and community. An alférez ("Lieutenant") and two tenientes ("assistants"), also of the cabildo, assisted the cacique. Next in descending order of authority were the alcaldes ("mayors"), two from the familia and two from the pueblo. Charged with administering sanctions imposed by the cabildo, either incarceration or lashes, were the fiscales. There were also alcaldes to administer the cattle ranches and communal plantings. All of these authorities possessed black canes of office, and all assembled on important occasions. Officials were installed on the first of January of each

year and those who acquitted themselves well in office could ascent ot a higher position in the cabildo (Parejas 1976: 38).

In addition ot the cabildo organization, each craft industry had a mayordomo ("overseer") and teniente who supervised that industry and were charged with quality control (Parejas 1976: 39). Such crafts included carpentry, masonry (for tile and adobe), weaving, saddlery, feather work, and smithery. Certain equipment items, or "capital goods," were also manufactured in the towns, including trapiches ("cane presses"), fondos ("cauldrons"), pailas ("sugar pans"), looms, forges, anvils, and lathes (Tormo 1966: 136). A foundry was installed in San Pedro for the casting of bells and steel edge tools, but which was in time used to produce also firearms and artillery of low caliber with which to combat the assaults of the Mamelucos on the missions of Varues (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 72).

To augment such traditional crops as plantains, corn, sweet potatoes, peanuts, beans, watermelons, and papaya, the Jesuits introduced rice, coffee, citrus, the tamarind, and cacao. Upland rice came in time to compete with manioc as a food staple. The native slash-and-burn system of shifting cultivation was maintained by the Jesuits for food crops, while cotton and cacao were cultivated in large forest plantations (Denevan 1966: 32). According to Leandro Tormo (1966: 131-33), in each mission there was a chacra del cura ("priest's garden") which was owned and worked communally.<sup>13</sup> From it

were fed the priests, the maestros ("masters") of the various crafts and special skills, and the numerous officials who served the community. The sick, the aged, the orphaned, the widowed, and guests of the mission were also provided for from this garden. The chacra further supplied a surplus of grains--corn and rice--which was warehoused in anticipation of lean years.

Generally, the Jesuits strove to maintain aboriginal labor forms; the only real communal labor innovation was the chacra del cura (Tormo and Tercero 1966: 96-97). Individual family gardens were maintained for household consumption, with the difference that they were worked with European tools. A kind of mutual labor service seems to have obtained aboriginally, with work remunerated in chicha. Here the Jesuits sought to change only the form of payment as part of their general campaign to eliminate drunkenness among the Indians.

The herds of mission cattle, especially numerous in Pampas (Zabala 1964: 181), came to play an increasingly important role in the diet and economy of the missions. Accordingly, the ranches were closely supervised by the Jesuits, and the position of vaguero ("cow hand") carried a status above that of mere agricultor ("agriculturalist"), which was deemed a vulgar occupation and of low status in the mission hierarchy (Tormo and Tercero 1966: 98). In a eulogy to Father Cipriano Barace, who drove the first cattle to Moxos from Santa Cruz at the founding of Loreto, Father Antonio de

Orellana writes at about 1705 that the cattle were to alleviate Barace's concern for the health of the priests as well as his fears that the frequent dispersion of the neophytes to hunt and fish might bring to naught the diligent labors of conversion (Orellana 1942: 12).

The relative importance and contribution to the native diet of fish and wild game vis-à-vis the beef alternative during the mission period, however, are often difficult to gauge. Writing from Moxos in 1695 about the five towns then in operation, Father Augustín Zapata says:

We maintain ourselves with cattle, manioc, corn, and fish, very abundant in season. The ranches are large; in addition to the practice of giving beef daily to the sick, it is given also to all those in need, including widows, orphans, and so on. Beef is served to the entire town four times per year on the fiestas of Christmas, Easter, San Javier, and Corpus Christi. In some towns beef is served even more often . . . (in Vargas Ugarte 1964: 74; my translation)

The cattle seem to have prospered on the plains of Moxos, for in 1767, year of the expulsion, they were inventoried at 54,345 head for the entire province. Also inventoried were 26,361 horses (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 146). Belonging to the mission of San Ignacio, in Pampas where cattle were more numerous, an inventory of livestock at the expulsion revealed 9,600 head of cattle distributed over three ranches, 1,600 horses, and 300 sheep (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 137). The town possessed more cattle than any of the other missions at expulsion (Tormo and Tercero 1966: 115).

The province engaged in commerce with Santa Cruz, and via Santa Cruz with the highland cities of Charcas (Sucre), Potosí, and Cochabamba, where Jesuit procuradores ("agents") marketed products from Moxos in order to in turn purchase European goods needed by the missions.<sup>14</sup> Most goods moved to and from the area by boat through the transfer port of Pailas, twelve leagues to the east of Santa Cruz on the Río Grande, though a dry-season oxcart trail along the Piray and Mamoré was occasionally also used (Denevan 1966: 32). The chief exports of Moxos were cotton textiles, cacao, and tallow, while secondary products included leather goods, straw hats, sugar, dried fish, hides, tamarind seeds (for drinks), and coffee (Denevan 1966: 32; Vargar Ugarte 1964: 73).

Formal education, both religious and secular, was also an important part of the mission enterprise. Children under twelve years of age were required to attend Mass daily and a vesper prayer service with catechism nightly. Attendance at Sunday Mass and an exegesis of doctrina ("doctrine") which followed were required of the elders. Children were educated in two schools, one for letters, the other for music, both choral and instrumental. Children were further obliged to learn to read and write, though the study of Spanish was prohibited (Parejas 1976: 40).

Turning to the theme of property relations in the mission province, the Spanish historian Leandro Tormo argues that the divergence between legal theory and practice was less in

Moxos than elsewhere because of the theological basis of the Laws of the Indies (Tormo 1966: 116-17). The interests of the Jesuits, therefore, coincided to a great degree with the interest and letter of the law. From the Jesuit point of view, lands occupied and used by the mission charges were inviolate and belonged to the Indians. Indeed, no Spaniard owned any land in Moxos Province at any time during the Jesuit occupation. Further, no baldfos (i.e., lands that were unoccupied and unused)--which by law belonged to the Crown--were recognized for Moxos since lands not occupied or under use at any given time were either flood-prone or held to be fallow and thus essential to the maintenance of the missions under the prevailing system of shifting cultivation (Tormo 1966: 117-18).

Father Provincial Antonio Garriga, in Moxos in 1715 to clarify the boundaries of each mission, writes:

Justice and equity demand that each town remain within the limits of its jurisdiction. No Indian or town will be permitted to occupy lands, cut palms, take beeswax or wood, pull up grass, or take calaba oil (aceite de Maria) within districts falling under the jurisdiction of another town.  
(Garriga 1906: 34; my translation)

After roughly delimiting the boundaries of each town existent at the time, Father Garriga admonishes the resident priests as follows:

Even though the aforesaid would seem sufficient to guarantee the towns their necessities, I beg and charge the priests to encourage charity among themselves and among the Indians by permitting the residents of neighboring towns to enter their

districts for the purpose of exploiting those resources available neither in neighboring districts nor in districts designated as common to more than one town. Such exploitation should, however, be with due moderation and only in those areas approved by officials of the jurisdiction in question. In this way no town will be damaged. Permission to exploit such resources in neighboring districts must and can only be obtained from the cabildos of those districts and with the approval of the resident priests.  
(Garriga 1906: 42; my translation)

The above passage suggests that rights over mission lands were vested in the native cabildos, though all decisions regarding the use of such lands and resources had to be approved by the resident priests. Within each mission, the priests designated zones for hunting, fishing, woodcutting, and what not so that the areas of exploitation of the several missions would not overlap (Tormo 1966: 128).

Also held to belong to the individual missions were those artifacts of the Jesuit occupation such as the chacra del cura, the cattle ranches, the craft workshops, and the warehouses (Tormo 1966: 129). According to Tormo (1966: 134), the chacra del cura and the cattle ranch were the great innovations of the Jesuit period, for they formed the economic base of the entire mission enterprise.

All of the mission towns were originally sited on the banks of navigable rivers or streams (Denevan 1966: 31) and in the proximity of ample stretches of forested high ground for crop cultivation. Built on the same design as the missions of Paraguay (Parejas 1976: 40-41), at the center of each town

was a large plaza on which fronted a church flanked by the rectory on one side and a cemetery on the other. Behind the rectory was a small garden, while to the side of it were the workshops and warehouses. Nearby were the cabildo and a house for widows and female "shut-ins" (viudas y recogidas). In each town there was also a guesthouse. The remaining sides of the plaza were occupied by the houses of native charges.

By mid-eighteenth century a marked degree of standardization in mission life had come to obtain in the various towns across the province. Father Juan José de Zabala, writing to his provincial in 1751 during a visita to the Moxos missions, comments as follows:

. . . for over the past few years, since these missions were founded, the priests have worked in like manner in all the towns to bring about a common life-style in accordance with the instructions left by Father Diego Francisco Altamirano. For this reason all of the towns of Moxos resemble each other, so that the particular customs of any one are also the general customs of all. (Zabala 1964: 180; my translation)

Among the more salient problems experienced by the missions were occasional hunger, the unrelenting scourge of pestes ("epidemic diseases"), and invasions by the Portuguese, or Mamelucos. Aside from forcing the frequent relocation of towns, the seasonal flooding posed a threat to agriculture and the mission food supply (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 75). In years of severe flooding, the extensive plantings of manioc, beans, corn, and rice were lost and the missions were forced to rely on stored provisions. When the waters were late in



receding, however, even the stores were consumed and hunger threatened.

Of far greater consequence for mission life were the European epidemic diseases, which often caused severe and sudden population drops. The towns of San José de las Pampas, San Miguel de Iténes, Santa Roas, San Luis, and San Pablo were abandoned because of decimating diseases and the surviving charges taken elsewhere (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 75-76). Father Altamirano, in the Carna Anna of 1701, reports that more than 1,100 natives died in that year of viruela ("smallpox") and 300 of mal de costado<sup>16</sup> in San Javier alone. Loreto also experienced a severe smallpox epidemic in the same year, while in San Luis about 1,300 Indians fled into the forests when an epidemic erupted there, believing that the peste was caused by a malignant spirit peculiar to the site (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 76-77). Father Juan José de Zabala, who visited the Moxos missions in 1725 and 1751, writes that the population in six missions of Pampas dropped from 10,600 to 4,409 between the two years (Zabala 1964: 181-82). In San Ignacio the population fell during the same time interval from 2,000 to 600. Zabala voices concern for the viability of the missions of Pampas because by 1751, except in the area of San Pablo, there were no bárbaros ("wild Indians") nearby to replenish the declining numbers. Denevan observes that the population of any given mission rarely exceeded 4,000, mainly because of epidemic disease, and that in 1713, when

the total mission population was 24,914, none of the sixteen missions then in existence had a population in excess of 2,100 Indians (Denevan 1966: 32).

Portuguese expansion also greatly menaced the mission towns, especially in Baures along the River Iténez.<sup>17</sup> The Mamelucos were entering Chiquitos<sup>18</sup> by 1696 and sacking missions there by 1700, an alarming state of affairs that led the superior Pedro Marbán to petition the Crown for firearms for the towns of Moxos and royal authorization for the Indians to bear them. The authorization was finally granted in 1723 (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 44, 49, 78). Indians were taken from San Pedro in 1763 to engage in armed combat with the Portuguese at Santa Rosa on the Iténez, but both that mission and San Miguel were soon captured by the Portuguese and the Jesuits evicted (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 119, 132). It was to contain the Portuguese expansion that Colonel Antonio Aymerich was dispatched to Moxos. But the mission of Aymerich changed radically when a boundary agreement was suddenly reached by the two peninsular powers, for to Aymerich fell the task of executing the royal orders to expel the Jesuits from Moxos.

The Jesuits profoundly transformed the natives of Moxos in some respects, especially in the areas of social organization, technology, and religion. The priests created sacred communities whose cultures consisted of a mélange of elements from Catholic Europe and native Amazonia. The

communities depended exclusively and fundamentally on a Jesuit presence and control, however, so that the Indians of Moxos had no experience in dealing with Spanish secular society, and were thus ill-prepared to cope with its arrival. The entire history of native peoples of the region from the expulsion of the Jesuits to the present can be seen as an effort to cope with Spanish and then Bolivian secular society.

From the Expulsion of the Jesuits  
to Independence: 1767-1824

The early post-Jesuit period was a transitional time and one of great strain for the mission system so diligently wrought by the Jesuits. The priests that replaced the Jesuits possessed neither the zeal nor the expertise of the latter. Whereas the Jesuits created theocracies with the ultimate power in the hands of priests, the period following the expulsion saw ecclesiastical and civil power vie for control of the mission towns and their Indian populations. The Indians themselves were often pawns in the power struggle. The period was in general one of economic decay in the mission towns, rampant exploitation of Indian labor, much native unrest, and dwindling native populations as Indians abandoned the towns and returned to bush.

The orders of Carlos III to expel the Jesuits were executed with haste by Governor Bucarelli of Buenos Aires. Colonel Antonio Aymerich, already in Moxos to check Portuguese

advances along the River Iténez, was ordered to evacuate all Jesuits from the province before the onset of the rains in 1767. Although not completed until April of 1768, the evacuation was orderly and encountered no opposition from the Jesuits.<sup>19</sup> Left behind were 30,000 Indians in fifteen mission towns (Parejas 1976: 41-42, 45).

Following the chronological scheme of Parejas (1976: 86), the immediate post-Jesuit history of Moxos conveniently divides into three time intervals, or phases: 1767-1784, when the missions were administered by curas ("curates") under the Bishopric of Santa Cruz; 1784-1792, marked by the reforms of Governor Lázaro de Ribera and efforts to move away from theocratic rule in the missions; and 1792-1802, when the reforms of Ribera were implemented and Indian uprisings were rife across the province.

The task of administering the province upon the departure of the Jesuits fell to Bishop Francisco Ramón de Herboso of Santa Cruz and to Antonio Aymerich, who served as governor until his death in 1772. Rumors of the impending expulsion reached Moxos before the arrival of orders for Aymerich, when native boatmen returned from Santa Cruz with news that the Jesuits there were preparing to leave. Considerable native unrest ensued immediately in the Mamoré missions of Loreto, Trinidad, and San Pedro; the Indians in Loreto, not knowing what to expect, prepared to flee into the forests (Parejas 1976: 42). Only with difficulty were the priests able to

calm the charges. Although the ultimate aim of the new government seems to have been to make the Indians free and independent agents subject to the Laws of the Indies (Parejas: 1976: 46), prudence thus counseled a gradual transition with no radical deviations initially from the Jesuit regime.

Aymerich declared that not a single Jesuit would be removed until his replacement arrived (Parejas 1976: 42), so that the expulsion orders found Bishop Herboso totally unprepared to recruit and send competent curas to Moxos on such short notice. The Jesuit superior was ordered to instruct the priests of the various towns to quickly prepare the native charges for the new order. The Indians were accordingly advised that the incoming curas would not speak the native languages and were given elaborate instructions on how to accommodate them. Detailed instructions, including confessional procedures in both Spanish and the particular native language, were also prepared by the Jesuits for the curas, advising them of practices often tailored to the various mission towns (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 131-32).

The Jesuits, then, were thus replaced by secular curas, two in the larger towns, one in charge of temporal and administrative affairs, the other of spiritual matters. The curas, generally ill-prepared for such work, were chosen in great haste from Santa Cruz and highland communities, some without having received holy orders. The governor of the province,

with residence in San Pedro, reported to the Audiencia of Charcas, while the curas reported to the Bishopric in Santa Cruz (Parejas 1976: 46-47; Vargas Ugarte 1964: 144).

From the death of Aymerich in 1772 until 1777, the province was in the hands of a series of interim governors. The curas, meanwhile, ruled with absolute authority in the various towns (Parejas 1976: 48). In 1777, with the Bourbon reforms and the installation of the intendancy system in Spanish America, an independent military government was established for Moxos and the territory under the jurisdiction of the Bishopric of Santa Cruz was made an intendancy. Moxos, then, with a resident military governor, came to be subordinate to the Intendant of Santa Cruz in politico-administrative matters and to the Bishop of Santa Cruz in ecclesiastical matters. As part of the territory of the Audiencia of Charcas, the province in 1778 passed to the Viceroyalty of Río de la Plata (Parejas 1976: 49-50).

Bishop Herboso prepared a lengthy plan, or reglamento, for the temporal and spiritual governing of the missions which was approved by the Crown in 1772, though not given to the governor to execute until 1775 (Parejas 1976: 48). Never implemented, the plan sought to make the governors more dependent on Santa Cruz (on the bishopric there, presumably) and to curtail their interventions in the administration of the mission towns, thus lessening the often severe conflicts between them and the curas. The plan generally stressed the

importance of continuing the Jesuit economic regime. With respect to the cattle ranches, Herboso said the following:

. . . they (i.e., the ranches) are public property, administered by the curas, who assign Indians to care for them. This should be the first objective of the curas in temporal matters, for the survival of the towns depends on the ranches. If the Indians lack beef they will begin to hunt monkeys, birds, and whatever else can be taken with arrows, thereby living in a dispersed state without government or religious doctrine, like infidels.  
(Tormo 1966: 135-36; my translation)

Accordingly, Bishop Herboso ordered the curas:

The principal charge that deserves primary attention is related to the ranches established by the Jesuits. This will be necessary for your own as well as for the public welfare. You must view the ranches as the patrimony of these poor wretches (i.e., the Indians) and as property that will provide them with food. (Tormo 1966: 136; my translation)

Both the incompetence and the venality of the curas brought much disorder to the mission towns. Not only were the curas unable to speak the native languages, and thus conduct religious rites and maintain costumbres ("customs") in a way meaningful to the Indians, but they also did such as disregard the traditional division of labor, forcing artesans, for example, to work the chacras or serve as oarsmen (Parejas 1976: 81). Further, unreasonable demands were made on the Indians to serve both curas and Cruzeños, now entering the province freely to trade, as carters and oarsmen, onerous labors that were greatly resented by the natives and the cause of much unrest, especially in the missions along the Mamoré

(Parejas 1976: 78-79). Such practices were a direct result of the venality of the curas, who even led the Indians to neglect their private gardens in order to work the communal ones the produce of which often entered a lucrative contraband trade maintained by the curas with both the Portuguese and itinerant Cruzeño merchants (Parejas 1976: 80). Cattle and horses also entered the contraband trade: the Portuguese gave gold in exchange for horses, and cattle were thoughtlessly butchered for the sale of tallow, thus threatening native subsistence (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 145).

There were two kinds of commerce in the province during the time of the curas: the illicit, or contraband variety just described, and an official commerce, involving the transport of agricultural, ranch, and industrial products to the Receptoría General ("Receiver's Office") in Santa Cruz, whence they were dispatched to other parts for sale to provide income to sustain the province (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 83). The principal products that generated income (i.e., "official" income) for the province at the time were cacao and cotton, while Moxos textiles, famous in Santa Cruz and the highlands, were also important. Of less importance were the cattle products of tallow and hides (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 80).<sup>20</sup>

The post-Jesuit era of the curas was generally marked by great tension between the mission priests and the governors, with the former refusing to give the latter an allegiance



that was theoretically their due. The problem of Portuguese incursions continued, but now Cruzeños were likewise entering the province to trade with the curas, rob the mission cattle, and search for Indian labor (Parejas 1976: 47; Vargas Ugarte 1964: 146). There was a marked decline also in the economic state of the missions as well as in their resident population numbers. Governor Lázaro de Rivera observed about 1788 that the Jesuit legacy of 30,000 Indians<sup>21</sup> in fifteen towns had been reduced to 20,000 Indians in eleven towns, largely without resources, without cattle, and in great decline (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 145). The Indians reacted, even violently, to the administration of the curas, though such reactions were less severe than they were to soon become. There was, for example, a native uprising against the curas in the mission of Exaltación, and San Simón was abandoned when the natives there returned to the forests (Parejas 1976: 92-93).

The second phase (1784-1792) of the post-Jesuit era in Moxos begins with the installation of Lázaro de Ribera as governor of the province in September of 1783. Recently arrived from Europe, Ribera visited various of the towns to better appraise their neglected state. The decadence he attributed to three factors: poor administration on the part of the curas, with a resulting decline in agriculture, ranching, and industry; the heavy contraband trade; and a diminution in the aboriginal population (Parejas 1976: 63).

Accordingly, Ribera formulated a plan which sought to reform the province by achieving the following broad objectives: to give careful attention to native welfare under a paternalistic system akin to that of the Jesuits; to substitute the curas with lay administrators for temporal matters; and to convert the natives into faithful subjects of the king (Parejas 1976: 88-91).

Convinced that a fundamental problem of Moxos lay in the theocratic rule of the curas, Ribera proceeded to relieve them of their temporal powers by reorganizing the administration of the province. To that end, subdelegados (later termed administradores), to report to the governor, were scattered over the province and charged with the temporal administration of the mission towns. One was installed for Loreto, Trinidad, and San Pedro; another for Magdalena; one for Concepción and San Joaquín; and, interestingly, a single subdelegado for the town of San Ignacio. The subdelegados were from Santa Cruz de la Sierra (Parejas 1976: 68).

The governor then turned to other matters. Since most of the communal chacras and ranches were at some remove from the towns, requiring that the attendant natives be absent from their families for extended periods, Ribera decreed that substantial houses be built at such sites and that the families be removed to them (Parejas 1976: 81). The province was again ordered closed to itinerant traders from Santa Cruz in an effort to eliminate contraband traffic and abuses

of the Indians. The latter were also relieved of the onerous tasks of haulage when the governor decreed that navigation be restricted to the movement of official merchandise and official personnel on official business (Parejas 1976: 78-79). Further, Ribera ordered that schools be established in each town for the purpose of instructing the Indians in Spanish, hoping that they would thereby one day be able to deal with Spaniards to their benefit as free and independent agents (Parejas 1976: 90). The governor admonished the curas to maintain the costumbres established by the Jesuits in regard to religious practices, ceremonies, and celebrations (Parejas 1976: 89-90). And as part of the effort to create subjects loyal to the king, a portrait of the royal person was to be placed in every cabildo (Parejas 1976: 90).

The reforms of Ribera were not put fully into practice until the governorship of Miguel Zamora, during the third phase of the post-Jesuit era at the close of the eighteenth century (Parejas 1976: 91-92). No violent disturbances among the Indians are documented for the period of Ribera, but the last five years of the century are plagued with them (Parejas 1976: 93).

With the installation of Miguel de Zamora y Triviño, last governor of the century, the third and final phase (1792-1802) of the post-Jesuit period begins. Predictably enough, the reforms of Ribera led to clashes between curas and subdelegados, but the latter, much as the curas were

during the first phase, had become venal and their actions self-serving (Parejas 1976: 79). As it had been under the rule of the curas, the Indians were again overworked and poorly treated, and the communal properties sorely mismanaged. The curas complained of the situation to Governor Zamora, but were spurned by him and in retaliation excommunicated him (Parejas 1976: 93).

Whereas during the first phase the Indians tended to see the curas as cause of their woes, they now, spurred by the curas, focused their grievances on the administrators (i.e., the subdelegados) and governor (Parejas 1976: 93). It was thus that with the excommunication of Zamora the Indians of San Pedro, led by the cacique Juan Marasa, who would play an important leadership role among natives of the province during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, revolted and drove Zamora from the town and province in 1801. Further, there is strong evidence that this revolt was planned for the entire province (Parejas 1976: 93-94).

The years following the expulsion of Zamora were filled with native insurrection led by cacique Juan Marasa of San Pedro (Parejas 1976: 94). Andrés José de Urquieta, a new administrator arriving in Loreto just after the expulsion of Zamora in 1801, was promptly accosted by the cacique there and told with insolence that cacique Juan Marasa of San Pedro was now chief authority in Moxos, and that the latter had proclaimed a new era in the province, one without king, or governor, or tribunal (Parejas 1976: 94).

The following tenure of Governor Alvarez (1802-1805) was characterized by much native unrest. Other Indian leaders emerged, such as Ignacio Muyba, cacique of San Javier. Responsible also for a disturbance in Trinidad, Muyba was incarcerated by the governor for insolence when the latter visited San Javier in 1803. The governor conducted a census of the province in that year, which revealed a population of 22,675 in thirteen towns. San Ignacio had a population of 1,667 (Parejas 1976: 76).

Unrest continued unabated in the province throughout the term of Governor Urquijo (1805-1812), successor to Alvarea. Urquijo notified the viceroy that the Indians of Moxos were insurrectionary, especially those of Loreto, Trinidad, and Reyes, and that his life had been threatened by them. In desperation, the governor finally ordered the execution of the cacique Pedro Muyba of San Javier. By 1812 the situation was critical and Urquijo was forced to flee the province for his life, the second governor to be expelled by the Indians (Parejas 1976: 95-96).

Of great importance for the Indians of Moxos, it was during the governorship of Urquijo that the Council of the Indies abolished the communal system of the missions (Parejas 1976: 95; Chavez Suárez 1944: 473-74). Thus the Indians--prematurely, as Urquijo argued (Chavez Suárez 1944: 473)--were made free and independent agents, owning properties severally and free to engage severally in commerce, to which the province was again opened.

Urquijo was followed by a series of interim governors, among them Manuel de la Vía in 1816. The town of San Ignacio, with a reported population of 1,395, was in that year relocated to its current site, the second relocation since its founding by the Jesuits (Chavez Suárez 1944: 485-86). In 1820, only a year after turning the government over to the titular governor, Colonel Francisco Javier Velasco, Manuel de la Vía referred to the towns of the province as "a sad picture of ruin and misery" (Chavez Suárez 1944: 486).

Cacique Marasa of San Pedro, having helped to quell an uprising among Trinitarios during the governorship of Urquijo, was by 1819, when Velasco became governor, considered decisive by both Indian and royal official in the administration of the province (Chavez Suárez 1944: 488). Governor Velasco, finding the authority of the cacique inconvenient, removed Marasa from his office of cacique for life and took from him the black cane of office, symbol of rank and authority among the Indians. When the cacique resisted the efforts of the governor, Velasco shot him dead. The Indians of San Pedro revolted, attacked the Spaniards there and killed the governor. Indian commissions were then dispatched to other towns in hopes of provoking a general uprising. When word of the murder of Velasco and a potential uprising reached Spanish authorities, the Commander General of Santa Cruz, Francisco Javier de Aguilera, was dispatched to Moxos to pacify the province (Chavez Suárez 1944: 488-89). Arriving

in San Pedro in 1822, the military expedition found a pervasive calm and the Indians docile. After passing through Trinidad, the expedition left the province in 1823, only six months after entering it and without having engaged in combat. Aguilera did, however, seize the opportunity to remove silver vessels and artifacts of Jesuit vintage from the churches of some of the towns (including San Ignacio), arguing that they were needed by the Crown as security to finance royal opposition to the wars of liberation then underway (Chavez Suárez 1944: 493-94). Such pillaging of silver religious artifacts continued throughout the nineteenth century.

It was at about this time, on the eve of independence from Spain and the creation of the Republic of the Bolivia, that Moxos ceased to be the independent military government established in 1777 and became instead a mere partido ("district") subject to Santa Cruz de la Sierra, administered by an official with the title of subdelegado and appointed by the Commander General of Santa Cruz (Chavez Suárez 1944: 496-97).

From the Founding of the Republic to the  
Collapse of the Rubber Boom: 1825-1912

The nineteenth century saw a further progressive undoing of Jesuit labors and the creation of a native peasantry, marginal with respect to regional and national socio-economic institutions. Considerable pressure emerged to banish the system of communal land tenure and controls on commerce in

favor of a system of economic individualism and private property. Whites began to enter the region in significant numbers to extract such forest products as vanilla, quinine, and rubber. There was also commercial traffic in cattle hides, cacao, and textiles. The Rubber Boom, which dominated the regional economy throughout the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth, was undoubtedly the most significant economic event of the era in regard to consequences for native peoples. Community life in the mission towns was sorely disrupted as Indians were taken by deception and force to harvest latex in the north. The quest for quick fortunes brought a large influx of Whites to the region, many of whom remained and settled in the mission towns after the sudden collapse of the Amazonian rubber market. It should be borne in mind, however, that the effects of all the above-mentioned events and processes on native peoples varied from one town to another, so that the disruption of tradition was greater in some communities than in others.

The struggle for emancipation and the wars of liberation hardly reached into Moxos. Only a minor uprising of troops cantoned in Trinidad was reported. But eventually royal troops garrisoned in Santa Cruz and Vallegrande fell to the separatist armies, so that all of Charcas, including Moxos, was thus liberated by about 1825 (Chavez Suárez 1944: 500-501).



Lieutenant Colonel Valeriano Fernández de Antezana was then named Military and Political Governor of the towns of Moxos, followed by Lieutenant Colonel Manuel Landívar, appointed by the now Prefect of Santa Cruz in 1826. Under the new republican politico-administrative organization, Moxos became a provincial appendage of the Department of Santa Cruz, a state of affairs that obtained until 1842, when the province achieved departmental status (Chavez Suárez 1944: 501).

Shortly after the founding of the Republic, Cruzeños headed northward into Moxos to traffic in cacao and cotton, both spun and crude, since these were the principal products of the region and could be readily obtained cheaply from the mission Indians. A few Cruzeños also acquired cattle at this time (Sanabria 1973b: 19). Alcide d'Orbigny, the French naturalist-explorer who was in Moxos during the 1830's, reported a native population of 22,803 in the missions at 1832 (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 147). Although Orbigny drew attention to the advantages of commerce with the towns of Moxos (René-Moreno 1974: 73), it was not until the creation of the Beni Department and the advent of new economic incentives that Whites began to enter Moxos in significant numbers.

In 1842, during the presidency of José Ballivián, Moxos was elevated to departmental status, and in 1847 Trinidad was made capital of the new department, replacing the old Jesuit capital of San Pedro. The creation of the Beni

Department was part of a larger scheme to promote the remote region's contribution to and participation in the new republic. Accordingly, a series of decrees, policies, and reforms emerged to that end.

About the Indians, President Ballivián observes in the preamble of the decree establishing the new department that "the peoples of the mission towns of Moxos are reduced to a deplorable state of slavery, oppression, and misery. The situation is so bad that even women are required to perform work and service that the weakness of their sex cannot endure" (Burton 1978: 33; my translation). Noting that the laws and constitutional guarantees enjoyed by citizens (Indians and others) elsewhere in the new republic had never been effectively extended to Moxos, Ballivián decreed that "the inhabitants of Moxos . . . be elevated to the status of Bolivian citizens, able to enjoy the rights of equality, liberty, and property that the laws guarantee to all Bolivians" (Burton 1978: 33; my translation). The president also noted in the preamble that "it is a duty of the Government to seek increases in the public wealth, an objective that cannot be achieved without property (private), commerce, and other kinds of industry" (Burton 1978: 33; my translation). To that end, a series of decrees followed (Burton 1978: 33-39).

Importantly, agricultural and pastoral lands, as well as residential sites in the towns were to be distributed among

the inhabitants of the department, both Indians and immigrants (naturales o foresteros). The recipients would pay an annual tax of two pesos, in cash or kind, and were to enjoy full rights of ownership. Indians were declared owners of their houses, and the corregidores of the various towns were ordered to construct a house for each Indian conjugal pair. Women were freed of all work and personal service obligations to the State. And the towns were opened to the settlement of immigrants, who were also to be assigned properties for agriculture, ranching, and housing.

The Beni Department was originally composed of the provinces of Moxos, Caupolicán, and Yuracarés, with a resident prefect under whom served a governor for each of the three provinces. Administrators (administradores de temporalidades) and curates remained in each of the mission towns of Moxos (Burton 1978: 37-38). The department underwent a further administrative change in 1856, when it was divided internally into the four provinces of Magdalena, Cercado, Sécure, and Reyes. Each province was further divided into cantons, which, at least in the Moxos region, carried the names of the mission towns on which they centered. The town of San Ignacio, on which the canton by the same name centered, was made capital of Sécure Province.<sup>22</sup> Trinidad, departmental capital, fell within and became capital of Cercado Province (Burton 1978: 39). A governor was named for each province and a resident corregidor for each canton (Burton

1978: 39). A curate remained in each of the towns, while primary-school teachers were dispatched to the provincial capitals (Burton 1978: 41).

In the spirit of the reforms begun by Ballivián, and if a further effort to abolish what René-Moreno (1974: 70) refers to as "communist fiscalism," a decree was promulgated, also in 1856, Article 4 of which reads: "All work obligations required of Indians of the Beni to provide 'temporalities' (temporalidades) are henceforth prohibited. Like other Indians of the Republic, those of the Beni are free to pursue private occupations of their own choosing" (Burton 1978: 39; my translation). Respecting the cacao groves, an article of the decree reads: "Until the cacao plantings are divided up among the Indians of the Beni, the respective corregidores will be charged with harvesting the crop for the Public Treasury: each day laborer engaged in the harvest task shall be remunerated in kind for each day's labor" (Burton 1978: 39; my translation). It can be inferred, then, that the Indians were no longer required to harvest the cacao groves for the benefit of the State, and that the trees themselves were partitioned among them. This interpretation is further supported by Article 8 of the decree, which reorganizes the fiscal structure of the towns in order to "fill the void left in the Public Treasury by the suppression of temporalities . . . " (Burton 1978: 41; my translation). Accordingly

a tax of one real was levied against each arroba of cacao, either refined (i.e., chocolate) or crude, that was taken from the Beni to another department, and a head tax of one peso levied against those cattle taken yearly from among the now wild herds (Burton 1978: 41). The corregidores, who received a percentage of all collections, were charged with collection of some of the new taxes in the towns, among them the tax (known as contribución personal) of two pesos annually to be paid by each landowner. In like manner, the corregidores also received a percentage (4%) of tax collections on wild cattle taken in their respective districts (Burton 1978: 40-41).

The creation of the Beni Department, with the associated reforms and policies of mid-nineteenth century, provided a legal and administrative structure which lasted well into the twentieth century but which paved the way for an almost immediate assault on the surviving communal forms of Jesuit vintage in the mission towns.

Immigration to Moxos increased dramatically after 1842. According to Sanabria (1973b: 19), toward 1850 about one-third of the population of the mission towns was composed of Whites and mestizos of Cruzeño origin. An era not only of free trade and free labor, but also of marked miscegenation had begun. Many of the traders now entering the region were highlanders, especially Cochabambinos; René-Moreno (1974: 68-69) says that they even came to dominate commerce in Moxos, thus superseding Cruzeños.

The post-independence era of the nineteenth century was a time of general neglect of the remote lowland regions and of endless revolutions in which the Indians of Moxos played no part. Revolutionary armies periodically entered Moxos to round up cattle and horses, and looting of the silver artifacts of the churches continued apace (Denevan 1966: 33). Franz Keller, in the region in the late 1860's, observes that the curas were melting down religious artifacts from the churches in order to sell the silver. He estimates that there were 3,000 pounds of silver in the fifteen missions at that time, but recalls that the church in San Pedro alone had had 2,000 pounds in Jesuit times (Keller 1875: 180-81).

Keller further remarks on the general neglect of the area by the highland government and the abandonment of the Indians to the mercies of unscrupulous traders, a state of affairs facilitated by the annual tax of four pesos per head required of the natives by the government (Keller 1875: 181-82). No efforts were made to extend and improve the cultivation of cacao, sugar cane, tobacco, and cotton (Keller 1875: 185-86). Nor were there attempts to encourage the impressive manual skills of the Indians, especially in the areas of plaiting and weaving. Instead, the natives were obliged to sell to traders at low prices palm-straw hats, ornamented rush mats, and cotton weavings of superb quality, all of which brought high prices in the highland towns. In turn, the Indians bought from the traders "at six times their

fair value, our (i.e., European) gaudy cottons, printed with glaring aniline colors, which the fair sex vastly prefer to the spotless white, or to the subdued colours of their own manufactures" (Keller 1875: 185-86). René-Moreno (1974: 70) observes that such European textiles flooded both highland and lowland markets after 1842 and did severe damage to native textile industries.

Keller goes on to describe the authorities in the mission towns at about 1870 (Keller 1875: 186). Typically, there was a corregidor, a priest, a primary-school teacher, and a native cacique at the head of a cabildo, though not all offices were filled in all of the towns. The caciques, some of whom were quite wealthy, exercised control over the Indians but were themselves often exploited by White traders, who took from them their wealth--houses, cattle, and silver--in exchange for mere baubles. Keller found Indians who could not only speak Spanish, but could read and write it as well, a circumstance which he attributes to the limited educational facilities. And lastly, he noted that the Moxos proper were found in Trinidad, Loreto, San Ignacio, and San Javier (Keller 1875: 199).

The mission cattle, meanwhile, many of which now roamed wild over the pampas, had come to be viewed by the highland government as an unlimited natural resource (Denevan 1963: 39; Osborne 1964: 88). Government debts were often cancelled and the salaries of local officials sometimes paid by the

issuance of letters of credit and bonds entitling the bearer to so many head of Moxos cattle (Denevan 1963: 40; Osborne 1964: 89). Government officials often sought to make quick money on the cattle of the region, mainly through the sale of hides and fat. The situation is described well by Manuel Limpias Saucedo:

The cattle which grazed in their thousands on the immense plains were decimated, driven in herds to Santa Cruz or slaughtered in the open country for the sake of their fat. The carcasses were abandoned in the pampa and they did not even trouble to select the beasts for slaughter. The land was depleted of cattle and horses to cover the letters of credit which the Government issued against the wealth of the Beni and to meet the demand for horses for the Army. . . . In July 1841 the Prefect of Santa Cruz said to a subordinate: 'The Government is confident that somehow or another you will manage to relieve the embarrassment of the National Treasury by the prompt dispatch of fat cattle for consumption.' (quoted in and translated by Osborne 1964: 89)

Keller likewise comments on such profligacy as he observed it in the late 1860's. Only the hides and tallow were used, he notes, the latter even burned as fuel in the mission towns. Further, for the past twenty-five years the national government had allowed "adventurers," mainly from Santa Cruz, to take as many cattle as desired from among the half-wild herds on the pampas near the missions upon payment of the one-peso head tax. The practice was quite lucrative for some of the corregidores, who were charged with supervising and taxing such exploitation in their respective districts (Keller 1876: 182-83). Keller says further:



At the present it is impossible even to calculate the extent of the damage that has been done; but it is quite certain that the Indians of the Missions, who till now were well-fed, are already so far degraded as to seek greedily for earth-worms, which they dry on cords before their cottages for their own consumption, and that they have begun to decrease in an accelerated ratio; which is surely effected, among other causes, by physical want. (Keller 1875: 185)

While the consumption of earth-worms cannot alone be taken as sufficient evidence of "physical want," since grubs and such did form a part of the pre-Columbian diet of Amazonian Indians, there is every reason to suspect that such uncontrolled exploitation of local cattle did threaten the native food supply as it certainly did in early post-Jesuit times, when mission Indians from some towns returned to bush and a dependence on wild game because of administrative neglect of the herds (Denevan 1963: 40).

The northern lowlands of Bolivia were the scene of the extraction of a variety of forest products throughout most of the nineteenth century, an extraction which became frenzied after 1850 and which brought with it even greater numbers of immigrants, especially Cruzeños, in search of quick wealth. After only minor flirtations with first vanilla and then beeswax (Denevan 1966: 33-34), gatherers turned in earnest to the collection of Peruvian bark, or Cinchona, to satisfy the demand of European chemical laboratories (Sanabria 1973: 30). Prior to the 1850's, only the montaña zones of Peru and Ecuador were significant in the bark trade. But when

Peruvian supplies were exhausted, the extractive focus moved south into the Bolivian montaña zones of Caupolicán (Apolobamba) and Cochabamba, which dominated the trade during the 1850's and 1860's. La Paz was the chief market for foreign buyers of Cinchona during those years, with Cochabamba an important subsidiary market. The product left the country by the Pacific port of Arica (Fifer 1972: 109). The old mission town of Reyes, at the western margin of the Beni plains, was an important bulking point for the bark at mid-nineteenth century, as were also the towns of Rurrenabaque, Apolo, and Santa Rosa (later called Puerto Salinas) (Fifer 1970: 118). It was to Reyes that the Cruzeño Nicolás Suárez, the greatest entrepreneur ever to emerge from the Bolivian lowlands, drifted in 1872, shortly before the Bolivian boom was abruptly shattered by cheaper production of quinine in Southeast Asia (Fifer 1970: 125).<sup>23</sup>

With the decline of the bark trade in the 1870's, those formerly engaged in it, Cuzeños and Benianos, turned to other pursuits, mainly to ranching and to the extraction of wild rubber on a modest scale. Ranching had always been an activity subsidiary to the collection of bark, especially on the extensive grasslands flanking the River Yacuma (Fifer 1970: 118). The significant wave of rubber exploitation, which was moving upriver along the Amazon and its tributaries, had not reached Bolivia by the 1870's. There were two core areas of only modest exploitation in Bolivia during the

decade: along the lower Mamoré and Iténez Rivers, and along the middle reaches of the River Beni, between Cavinass and Reyes (Fifer 1970: 117-118). The American physician Edwin Heath estimated that fewer than 200 men were working rubber on the River Beni at the close of 1880 (Fifer 1970: 124). Indeed, until that year, when Heath descended the Beni to its confluence with the Madera, it was not known whether the Beni flowed into the Madeira-Mamoré system or into the Purus. Moreover, hostile Indians were held to inhabit the lower reaches of the river. Accordingly, prior to 1880 all rubber from the River Beni was moved upstream to Puerto Salinas (Santa Rosa) whence it was carted overland via Reyes, to the River Yacuma and from there rafted to the Mamoré and out through Brazil (Fifer 1970: 119-20).

The impact of the rubber trade on the natives of Moxos, primarily through its voracious demand for labor, seems to have antedated the actual collection of the resin on Bolivian soil. Edward Matthews, commenting generally on the pernicious effects of the trade on native peoples, says that the human exodus between 1862 and 1872 from the Beni towns to work in rubber to the north and in Brazil was heavy (René-Moreno 1974: 402-403). Indians were not permitted to take their wives and families, with the result that the ratio of women to men in some of the towns was five to one. Matthews estimates the native population of the fifteen towns of the Beni about 1879 to be no more than 8,000. Franz Keller,

traveling on the Madeira in the 1870's, speaks of Bolivian seringueiros ("rubber collectors") working in the area of the Madeira Falls, "each . . . with twenty or thirty Mojos Indians" (quoted in Fifer 1970: 117).<sup>24</sup> One town, Carmen, was reported in 1874 to consist of a population of 750 females and 10 males (René-Moreno 1974: 74). The men had been ordered removed by the prefect, who received one conto per head from Brazilian entrepreneurs. The writer recalls a story told him with vivid detail by an old Ignaciano, who in turn had heard it as a child, of a voyage down the Mamoré, into Brazil and on to Colombia made by a relative who served a White patrón as peón during the excursion. But whatever the magnitude of the impact of the trade on the natives of Moxos prior to 1881, it certainly increased thereafter, for the year by convention marks the beginning of the Bolivian rubber boom (Fifer 1970: 124).

Like elsewhere in Amazonia, the rubber regions of Bolivia were characterized by a chronic dearth of indigenous labor. The lowlands were scoured for labor during the 1880's, when convoys of Cruzeños and Benianos were organized and taken to the rubber forests (Fifer 1970: 127). Even before 1900, by which time the forests of the northern and north-eastern Bolivia were universally acknowledged as the most important rubber areas in the world (Fifer 1972: 114), the departments of Beni and Santa Cruz had begun to complain of depopulation caused by the great human exodus for the rubber

forests (Fifer 1979: 132). The demand for labor in the zones of extraction became so great that women were conscripted (René-Moreno 1974: 75). José María Urdininea, dispatched by the national government to the Beni as prefect to put an end to the chaos and by now considerable native unrest in the department, writes at about 1887: "This department is completely depopulated owing to the removal of its inhabitants to the Madera, beginning years ago, to collect rubber, from where rare is he who returns" (quoted in René-Moreno 1974: 79; my translation). The prefect goes on to describe the state of those natives who remained in the towns:

The Indians that remain here are truly slaves. A White engages an Indian laborer for six pesos monthly, giving him in advance whatever sum of money he asks with which to attend to the necessities of his family or get drunk. The debt grows with time, and the Indian dies without having cancelled it, a slave, separated from his wife and children. (quoted in René-Moreno 1974: 80; my translation)

Urdininea then analyzes the problem and suggests a solution in the most general terms:

These Indians are not able to be citizens because they are incapable of governing themselves; they have the character of children and need the tutelage and protection of the missionary, who is to them both father and defender of their rights. In a word, to revive the Beni it is necessary to protect the Indian, to subject him to the old regime observed by the Jesuits and that produced such brilliant results. The same cause will produce the same results. (quoted in René-Moreno 1974: 80; my translation)

Labor was levied and retained through a system of debt peonage known as enganche de peones ("enlistment of peons").

Agents (enganchadores), working either independently or for the rubber firms, entered towns across the eastern lowlands to secure laborers, typically through enticements of advance credit and wild promises (Sanabria 1973: 95-96), and take them in convoys to the rubber forests of the north. In San Ignacio White corregidores collaborated with enganchadores to provide a regular compliment of Indians. Suárez Hermanos, largest of the rubber firms, required its peones to sign a written contract specifying the terms of employment (Fifer 1970: 140).

While each peón worked for a monthly salary and received in addition a modest ration of foodstuffs, disbursements invariably outpaced income so that debt became perpetual. Peones were in some cases even charged for their own transport to the work zones. A limited assortment of necessities and consumer goods, including cane alcohol in ample quantities, was made readily available to the workers on credit at company stores.

The atrocities and human suffering of the Rubber Boom have been amply documented. Affections commonly suffered by the collectors include malaria, blackwater and other fevers, tuberculosis, pneumonia, and beri-beri (Fifer 1972: 138). And these, of course, were in addition to the complex of infectious diseases such as smallpox, measles, and influenza which have continued to take a frightful toll among native peoples of the area down to the present day. One old

Ignaciano related to the writer something of what he witnessed in San Ignacio and heard from those returning to the town from the rubber forests when he was a young man:

The Caraiyana ("Whites), the contratistas ("labor agents") finally came to San Ignacio to take people away. They came from Trinidad, for there were more Whites there then than here. There was a White corregidor here who gathered people and sold them to the contratistas. The cacique here was a rich man, he had cattle and everything, but he could not defend his people; rather, he was forced to collaborate with the corregidor and the contratistas to provide workers, for those were very political times, times when the Liberals, an active but terrible bunch, controlled everything.

In those years the pound sterling circulated hereabouts, there were no bills; the contratistas would sometimes offer a hat-full of the white coins to entice people to go with them to collect rubber. I also remember that some of the women here wore rosaries of such coins. The work contracts, which had to be signed, were for one year. Some of those who went never returned, for they died in the rubber forests. But many did return. Some of them did not have the money to return after one year and had to say on. Others returned as best they could, at their own expense, for they were promptly discarded and forgotten once the contract was fulfilled.

Each person had to work an estrada ("rubber trail"), alone. Even the women--for women were also taken to work--had their own estradas. Some of the collectors had men working under them who did such as clear trails.

The collectors suffered very much; some died of yellow fever. People were truly slaves in those years . . . How the Ignacianos had to submit and endure it! I remember well the Ignacianos who

returned and told of their experiences to the north, even though I was quite young then. They would gather here in San Ignacio to drink and sing--the seringueros had their songs, you know. They would often cry as they recalled their sufferings in the forests, where there was no cattle, no fresh beef. They were forced to eat monkeys and badgers. The charqui that formed part of the food ration was often stale and of foul taste. Those are the things they told. And then there was the tigre negro (one of the felines, black) which hunted the seringueros. 'Life was sad there,' as the sister of my grandmother, who worked as a gatherer, used to say.

The British Minister Gosling, who made a five-month fact-finding journey through the lowlands in 1913, writes in that late year:

As a result of my journey . . . I am convinced that the peonage as it obtains in the Beni is undisguised slavery, with many of its attendant abuses . . . It is not infrequent in the Beni to be told, talking of rubber labour, that the conditions are worse than in the Putumayo. This, however, I do not believe to be the case for, except in very unusual instances, it would not appear that the natives are tortured by their employers . . . But Baures, Trinidad, Santa Ana and Santa Cruz have been denuded of male labour, and the provinces of Mojos, Velasco, and Chiquitos . . . are completely depopulated. (quoted in Fifer 1970: 140-41)

The Indians, at least in some of the towns, reacted early on, before the Rubber Boom, to the invasion of the region by Whites. Daniel Suárez, a former prefect of Beni, writes in 1887, by which year there were violent clashes in the department between natives and Whites:

About thirty years ago, when Whites began to settle in the region, the Indians



first manifested their discontent and hatred of the new settlers. The Indian believed himself then, as he does today, owner and exclusive lord of this land, and looked with troubled and rancorous eyes upon those whom he felt to be outsiders. It was then that Indians began to abandon Trinidad in order to form on the pampas, then mainly unexplored, the settlements of San Lázaro, Roma-Trinidad, San Francisco, Rosario, and San Lorenzo. An educated and truly patriotic parish priest, Señor Rivero,<sup>25</sup> entered the forests in order to return some of them to a civilized way of life. It must be noted that at that time there were no labor recruiters (enganchadores), for the rubber industry had not then been dreamed of. (quoted in René-Moreno 1974: 75-76; my translation)

With the advent of the Rubber Boom, however, the native response came to include not only flight, but also violent resistance.

Suárez continues:

With the Rubber Boom and the consequent increase in the White population, the Indians began increasingly to show their growing rancor. Numerous murders, under circumstances of great cruelty, have been committed. . . .

On top of the hatred, focused and matured by time, freedom<sup>26</sup> arrived to complete the depopulation of the region. Immorality and drunkenness increased, with the result that those who went to the rubber forests along the Madera could not pay off their incurred debts and could not return to their hometowns. San Lorenzo came to be the refuge of all the swindlers (petardistas) who fled the payment of debts and the fulfillment of contracted obligations. (quoted in René-Moreno 1974: 76; my translation)

It is in this context of increasing White immigration and demand for native labor, and with it the mounting confrontation and violence between the two sectors of the population, that

a messianic movement emerged, led by Andrés Guachoco, a Trinitario, in 1887 (René-Moreno 1974: 76; Riester 1976: 311-12).

Guachoco, the messiah, proclaimed himself the incarnation of God and preached the impending destruction of Trinidad and the Whites. Followers were told of the necessity to abandon the town, the church there, and the priest. But the movement soon assumed a militaristic character and Guachoco urged his followers to expel the White invaders by force, whereupon the Indians marched on Trinidad and killed some Whites. Bolivian troops soon responded and put down the uprising, using firearms against the bows and arrows of the Indians. Guachoco and other instigators were executed and their followers retired to the settlements of San Francisco and San Lorenzo to the southwest (today in Moxos Province).

While there was some legislation (the Leyes de enganche) passed in 1896 to correct the worst abuses of the system of debt peonage in the rubber trade (Fifer 1970: 140), it was only with the collapse of the South American Rubber Boom in 1912, when men perforce turned to more equable pursuits, that some measure of respite came to the masses of the region.

There were some efforts to replace the declining revenues from rubber with the collection of Brazil nuts (castaña) for export, an activity in which Suárez and Co. Ltd., a firm that dominated the Bolivian rubber trade and that still had massive and diverse holdings throughout the lowlands, especially

in cattle, became engaged in 1931 (Fifer 1970: 144). Casa Suárez, a formidable economic force in the Beni until 1952, was thus involved throughout the first half of the twentieth century in the extraction of Brazil nuts, some rubber and with the ranching of a half-million head of cattle (Fifer 1970: 144). The cattle interests, which were substantial during the Rubber Boom and provided Suárez collectors with their ration of charqui, later came to involve vast holdings in land and cattle, holdings which were not broken up until the Agrarian Reform in 1953.

San Ignacio from Late Nineteenth Century  
to the Eve of the Chaco War

Oral histories now permit the abandonment of a region-wide historical treatment in favor of a focus on the particular community of San Ignacio. While the last quarter of the nineteenth century saw many Whites settle in the towns of the Beni, evidence is that the only Whites settled in San Ignacio until about the last decade of that century were the corregidor and the priest. The community was then an Indian town, with the cacique and Cabildo in virtually complete control. Traders arrived from Trinidad for the cacao and coffee harvests in order to exchange necessities for the fresh beans, but the duration of their presence in the community was monitored and limited by local authorities. The following years, however, until about 1930, saw a

progressive and heavy White immigration to the town. During this interval of time the socio-cultural forms and conflicts of the dual community which are portrayed in the following chapters began to crystallize.

There seems to have been a sort of native aristocracy present in San Ignacio on the eve of White settlement in the community, the remnants of which continued well into the twentieth century. Members of this group of families held the higher offices of the politico-religious structure, intermarried, resided about the plaza, and are typically described by older Igancianos as having been wealthy in cattle and cacao. The surnames of these early families even today have about them a prestigious ring for Ignacianos. Those early years are described by the few old people who can recall them as a time without patrones and mozos ("peons"), a time of plenty and happiness for Ignacianos.

And then came the Rubber Boom and the arrival of enganchadores in search of native labor, events already described. While the resulting sufferings of Ignacianos were real enough, sufferings immortalized yet in story and song, they were not, as some of the elders are quick to recall, as great as were those of the Trinitarios, who by virtue of the location of Trinidad near the Mamoré experienced the brunt of the White invasion, settlement, and search for native labor. Indeed, it seems to be the remote location of San Ignacio, which until 1975 and the completion of the motor

road was four days by oxcart from Trinidad in the dry season, that has made it marginal, at least until 1950, to much of the post-Jesuit economic history of the region and that best accounts for the survival of a wealth of native and Jesuit traditions.

A perusal of parish archives in San Ignacio at intervals beginning in 1889, the first year for which baptismal records are complete,<sup>27</sup> reveals no White births and 138 Indian births registered in that year. Neither are there White births recorded in 1890, but three are recorded in 1900. The figure for such births subsequently arises to sixteen in 1910 and to eighty-six in 1920, eight years after the collapse of the Rubber Boom. The first White settlers (the corregidor excepted), mostly Cruzeños, began to arrive in small numbers during the 1890's. Among them were three brothers, Cruzeños, who came from the Acre, where they had sold their interests to Casa Suárez. According to the son of one of them, San Ignacio was chosen for settlement because the Indians there were "civilized" and the lands apt for cattle and cane. The brothers soon acquired an abundance of cattle, much of it purchased from the corregidor who then owned vast herds in the area. All of these early settlers thus acquired cattle, often from the Indians through barter.

The following years saw the arrival of more Whites, especially with the collapse of the Rubber Boom. In addition to the occupations of ranching and agriculture, especially

the production of sugar, the new settlers took over local commerce which theretofore had been in the hands of itinerant traders. Cacao and coffee from the Indian groves figured prominently, and the capital accumulated was typically invested in cattle, usually acquired from the Indians, who so often relinquished it for mere trifles.

The Beni was made a vicariate by Pope Benedict XV in 1917, with Trinidad the seat of the new entity (Mendizábel 1932: 17-30). The first vicar apostolic, Ramón Calvo, was named in 1919, and in December of that year a Spanish Franciscan, Father Estanislao V. de Marchena, arrived in San Ignacio to assume pastoral duties there. Thus ended the long years of spiritual rule of the curas under the Bishopric of Santa Cruz.

As part of a building campaign initiated by the Franciscans soon upon taking charge of the mission towns, a new church was constructed in San Ignacio with labor furnished by the Indians and materials provided by the widow of one of the early Cruzeño settlers, the first matron of San Ignacio, a woman of great piety and heiress of, by then, a considerable fortune in cattle. Marchena also ordered that a meeting and ceremonial house for the Indians, known as the "Belen" ("Bethlehem"), be constructed in the church compound. Native ceremonies and Cabildo meetings had theretofore been held at the house of the cacique.

Except for suppressing a single native dance group, the routines of which he considered vulgar, Father Marchena

attempted no additions or deletions in the area of native custom. On the contrary, the entire Jesuitic politico-religious complex and the numerous music and dance groups, all of which had emerged from the nineteenth century at least intact if not with a certain vitality, were promoted enthusiastically by the new priest. It was Marchena's belief, according to one who knew him well, that the Indians would return to the forests and barbarity if they were denied their longstanding customs.

San Ignacio was reported by Father Marchena to have a population of 2,500 blancos ("Whites") and 2,580 indios ("Indians") in about 1930 (Mendizábal 1932: 248). By this year, on the eve of war in the Chaco, a kind of culturally dual society had emerged in definitive form, one which was disturbed by the war and which was never quite restored when peace returned. It will be of profit, therefore, to portray the community of San Ignacio in about 1930 with some pains, for the year can serve as a bench mark from which the profound and rapid changes of ensuing decades can be reckoned.

In the White sector, the twin institutions of production were the estancia, or cattle ranch, and the establecimiento, or sugar estate. More than 1,000,000 head of cattle, most of them feral, were estimated to roam the Beni plains at the turn of the century (Denevan 1963: 40). Estimates for subsequent years vary widely. An investigative team from the Beni, after reconnoitering the department

province by province in 1924, reported the presence of 241,290 head of cattle (Mendizábal 1932: 229), though it would seem that wild cattle are not included in the figure. José Chavez Suárez estimated (Mendizábal 1932: 230) 1,000,000 head of cattle, including both feral and domesticated, for the department in about 1930. Feral or semi-feral cattle were found in the area of San Ignacio during the period, but these were usually cattle that had strayed from local ranch properties--never fenced--for want of attention. Although far less numerous than today, cattle were numerous in the area of the town by standards of the time, especially on the grasslands along the Tijamjchf.

The typical ranch in San Ignacio in 1930 had between 400 and 500 head of cattle. Ranchers then, as do many of the large ones today, often owned more than one ranch. The largest cattle holding at the time, for example, consisted of fourteen estancias, or puestos ("spreads"), with a total of 9,015 head (cows and bulls) and 388 oxen. The largest of these puestos, on the Tijamuchf, had 1,465 head and 11 oxen, while the smallest had only 282 head and 27 oxen. Before the decade of the 1950's, when some ranchers began to vaccinate cattle, numbers were constantly checked by such diseases as uñeta (fiebre aftosa, or "hoof-and-mouth disease"), lengueta (carbúnculo hemático), and cadera (rabia pareciante bovina). Such cattle diseases seem to have intensified during the decade of the 1940's, when entire herds were ravished, belonging to both White and Indian.



Most of the cattle belonging to Whites at the time had been acquired from Indians, a process that was to continue throughout the following years. In addition to the production of meat, hides, tallow, and dairy products for local consumption, hides were shipped to Trinidad for sale to commercial houses there, from where they were taken to Cochabamba for tanning. Sold also to commercial houses in Trinidad were tallow and charqui, the latter transported in five-arroba bundles known as empacotes. Some of the charqui was dispatched in turn downriver to Guayaramerin and Riberalta, there to feed labor engaged in the collection of rubber and Brazil nuts. A trickle of live cattle also left the area by trail for Santa Cruz to the south and for the extraction zones to the north. Horses were often brought to the area from Santa Cruz and exchanged for cattle.

The typical ranch was managed by a mayordomo ("foreman") aided by two vagueros ("cowhands"), all of whom resided with their families on the ranch property. The vagueros were invariably Indian, the mayordomo sometimes so. The monthly salary of a mayordomo in those years ranged between 200 and 300 bolivianos, while that of a vaguero was between 15 and 25 bolivianos. In addition, the mayordomo was allowed a monthly food ration from which he also supplied the vagueros. Included were a fat cow from the herd, chosen by the mayordomo, and a supply of sugar and salt (for making charqui). In those grazing areas which lacked sufficient forest to

make gardens, as on the plains of the Tijamuchí, the patrón also included rice, corn, plantains, and manioc in the ration. But elsewhere the personnel were expected to make and maintain gardens. While items such as candles and soap were made on the ranch from beef tallow, which also supplied lard for cooking, other items requested by the workers of the patrón were charged to their accounts and deducted from their salaries. Milk and its derivatives were freely available from the herds.

Establecimientos were far less numerous than estancias. Whereas there were estancia owners who had no establecimientos, owners of the latter usually owned also at least three or four estancias and operated the two institutions of production in a mutually complementary and profitable fashion: the ranches furnished beef and dairy products for estate agricultural personnel as well as oxen to drive the cane presses, while the estates provided the food ration for ranch labor.

The chief occupation of the establecimiento was the cultivation and milling of sugar cane, though large plantings of the regional staples of rice, corn, yuca, and plantains were also maintained. Cacao and coffee were planted on some of the estates, but only for internal consumption. That portion of the harvest of staple crops not destined for internal consumption, as well as large quantities of sugar, were taken to Trinidad for sale to commercial houses. Also taken from the estates for sale in Trinidad were large amounts of chivé ("fermented manioc flour") and almidón ("manioc starch").

There were no more than a half-dozen relatively large establecimientos in the San Ignacio area in 1930 and only a few more of lesser size. One such large estate, though not the largest reported, employed fifty men (called mozos) and twenty-five women, often wives of the men, under full-time contract. In addition to the regular workers, ten families of inquilinos ("tenants") were settled on the estate. The inquilinos were under contract to cultivate cane and make gardens for the estate.

The proprietor of a typical estate maintained two houses, one on the estate and another in San Ignacio proper. The better of the two houses, however, was the estate house since there the owner and his family spent most of their time. This pattern is the inverse of that of today, where ranchers live in comfortable town houses in San Ignacio and only occasionally visit their properties, where they maintain rudimentary accommodations. Working under the proprietor (or patrón) was a capataz ("overseer"), who distributed and supervised the work of the mozos. The capataz was always White, sometimes a member of the proprietor's family, while the mozos were always Indian. The larger estates typically employed an accountant.

Most of the men were employed in agriculture, especially in the cultivation and milling of cane. The milling season was a time of peak activity on the estates. But each estate also had its specialists, such as men who fashioned and

repaired the wooden beds and wheels of oxcarts, and men who skillfully crafted the wooden trapiches, or cane presses. Such technology, as it is today in San Ignacio, was possessed almost exclusively by Indians. A battery of Indian women was employed about the estate, spinning cotton thread, weaving, washing clothes, cooking, cleaning, making candles (the only light then available) and soap, and crafting the ceramic hormas, or large conical vats in which sugar was shipped and stored.

Agricultural work was usually assigned by the tarea ("task"), so that if a mozo finished his tarea before the close of the workday, which ran from sunup to sundown, he was by convention free to engage in pursuits of his choice. There were, however, patrones who abused the convention. The workweek on the estates was six days, with the mozos free to labor in their own gardens or attend to other matters on the seventh day, usually Sunday. Requests by workers for leave days in order to work in their own gardens or attend to personal matters were often granted, though without pay. Estate owners respected the major fiestas of San Ignacio and released workers to attend them. Everybody, including the patrón, went to town for Christmas, Holy Week, and the Fiesta of San Ignacio on July 31. Workers were dismissed a week in advance of this last event in order to assist the Cabildo with fiesta preparations as well as to purchase cloth (for clothing) and other personal items. It was also a time of bustling commercial activity in the town.

Derelictions on the estates were punishable by flogging, though there was much variation in its use in terms of frequency and severity from one estate to another.

Mozos on the estates received the same monthly salary as did vagueros on the cattle ranches. In addition, three meals per day were taken by the mozo at the house of the patrón. All other provisions, such as charqui, beef lard, sugar, salt, soap, and candles were charged to the worker's account. Such items, which the mozo needed for domestic maintenance, could be a heavy expense for those with large families and thus added to the worker's indebtedness. This problem, however, was diminished somewhat in those cases where the wife also worked on the estate and thus received a salary and daily meals for herself and the children. Other items, such as cloth, machetes, axes, spades, mirrors, combs, earrings, necklaces, and alcohol, which was sometimes distilled on the premises, were available on credit from the estate, where a small general store was often maintained. Where there was no such store, the patrón usually made arrangements with a merchant in San Ignacio whereby workers could make purchases on credit there, typically during the Fiesta of San Ignacio, with the accumulated debts being transferred to their accounts on the estate. The disposition of agricultural surpluses from the family gardens of the mozos, most often on estate property, was sometimes controlled by the patrón, who could require that all such surpluses be sold to

him. In general, the estate was closed to itinerant traders so that all commercial activity involving the workers could be carefully controlled by the patrón.

The key to the viability of both the estancia and the establecimiento was the procurement and retention of cheap labor, and for that there was an institution known as the matrícula ("matriculation"). The patrón and a prospective worker would go to a local authority--to the corregidor before 1937, to a police intendant thereafter--where a work contract (also called the matrícula) was drawn up and signed by both parties. The contract stipulated the work period, usually one year, the monthly salary, and the obligation of the patrón to provide medical benefits for work-related ailments (but the burden of proof rested with the mozo). The document further stipulated that both parties were to adhere to the terms of the contract or else incur a fine. Specified also was the salary advance received by the mozo from the patrón. This last item was of critical importance, for it was through a fuerte anticipo ("steep salary advance"), as one old patrón put it, that labor was secured for local production. The advance was commonly for three to four months of wages, but occasionally an entire year's wages were advanced. The initial advance and all subsequent advances, however, were usually made in merchandise, only rarely in cash. If a laborer did not owe his patrón at the close of the contract period, he was free to leave the estate; but it was usually the case that he was in debt and

thus had to remain. If a mozo wished to leave an estate where he had outstanding debts he could sometimes obtain a permit from local White officials which granted him a period of time--say three days--during which to search for means to cancel the debt. This, of course, most often meant finding another patrón who would clear the outstanding debt in return for a labor commitment. Thus the cycle began anew. At the death of a mozo his sons were often required to assume the burden of all outstanding debts.

There was also the practice on the estates of sometimes contracting jornaleros, or day laborers, for the milling season, when the demand for labor was high. Such contracts were often written, specifying the number of days to be worked and the daily wage, but were not drawn up in the presence of the corregidor or police intendant.

Most of the establecimientos were within easy commuting distance of San Ignacio. Perhaps the largest was only five leagues (see Note 34, Chapter 2) distant while two other large ones were six leagues and another was three leagues distant. Some of the estancias, of course, were further.

Only a few of the estancia and establecimiento properties were titled in those years. Above all, it was the use of a property that validated its possession. This was in part the reason that large cattle holdings were partitioned into various estancias, or puestos, often contiguous, each with its house of thatch and resident vagueros. Such puestos

were assertions of claims and served crudely to mark boundaries. Neither were the precise areal extensions of such properties a concern, a point impressed upon the writer when he tried unavailingly to elicit them in quantitative terms. Those who held title to properties rarely confined their activities to the stipulated bounds.

Turning now to the Indian sector of the community in 1930, reliable sources estimate that between forty and sixty percent of all native household heads were bonded to either estancias or establecimientos through debt. Using the population figures for 1930 supplied above, this would mean that from roughly 1,032 to 1,548 Ignacianos did not work with patrones and did not live under the conditions of debt peonage. Informants further relate that the Indians who worked as mozos were those who were economically less well off. Indeed, the matrícula focused on those Indians perceived by White authorities and proprietors as idle or unemployed, who were often forced to sign the labor contracts.

The free Indians lived in town, usually quite near the plaza, which the houses of some members of the native aristocracy still fronted. The process of displacement to the periphery of the town by Whites, however, had already begun. The free Indians held the higher offices of the politico-religious structure and managed the lavish ceremonials and fiestas, which they could well do because of their privileged economic position within the native sector. The mozos, who



held some of the lower positions--e.g., comisarios (charged with menial labor and errands) of the Cabildo--would assist with fiesta preparations upon their arrival in town from the estates.

The free Indians maintained their gardens nearby, within a three- to four-kilometer radius of the town. Virtually all of the free Indians, and some of the mozos as well, owned coffee and cacao groves, which were even closer to the town than were some of the gardens. Some Indian families had cane presses and produced sugar in small quantities for both domestic consumption and local exchange. Nearly every free Indian family owned a team of draft oxen and often a few cows for milk and its products. Not uncommon were families with from 200 to 300 or more head of cattle and the horses to work them. Many mozos of the time also had draft oxen, so necessary for moving building materials and harvests from forest and garden to house and town. And some Ignacianos report having killed feral cattle, reputedly numerous in parts of the area, for meat throughout the years prior to 1930.

There was little Spanish spoken by Ignacianos in 1930; indeed, few were able to carry on a conversation in Spanish, and the women had no knowledge of the language. The traditional dress--camijeta and straw hat for the men, tipoy for the women--from the Jesuit era was still worn daily,

for both work and ceremony, and everybody went barefoot. Fiestas and weddings were still splendid affairs, the latter often lasting a week, with lavish quantities of food and chicha. In short, it was an era when costumbres were by and large still practiced with confidence and satisfaction by Ignacianos, young and old.

Important to the bicultural community of the times was commerce; it and labor served to articulate the White and Indian sectors. Money was rarely used in exchange transactions to which Indians were party. Such transactions were effected instead through cambalache ("barter"). Coffee and cacao, especially cacao, figured most importantly in this regard, for the wet beans were exchanged for a variety of goods with local traders who wandered from house to house during the harvest seasons. The beans were in turn dried and either sold in Trinidad or held for highlanders, who took them from San Ignacio to Cochabamba. Sugar, hens and eggs, and the entire spectrum of regional crops were also exchanged throughout the year against necessities, though their exchange value was considerably less than that of the tree crops. Perhaps most avidly sought among the items traded for were gêneros ("cuts of cloth"), especially lienzo ("linen"), from which camijetas and tipoys were made. Gêneros were most often obtained with cacao. Fresh beef, charqui, beef lard, and tallow candles were also obtained through exchange, for not all families possessed cattle in sufficient numbers for slaughter. Here, it was the practice at the time for cattle

to be periodically slaughtered in the town, either by White ranchers or local butchers who bought cattle from them, and for the fresh meat and lard to be exchanged in the manner just described. One tutúma of cacao beans, for example, would buy one vara (= .84 cm) of lienzo.

To close, the process whereby the Indian community exchanged its cattle, its lands, its labor, and its crops, always to its detriment, was well underway by 1930. Infinitely insidious, the mechanism of the process was aptly described by one local White observer as the "embrace of the bear"-- i.e., the Indian emerges with less from each transaction, or "embrace," with the White.

#### San Ignacio from the Chaco War to 1950

The Chaco War (1932-1935) worked significantly to subvert what had become a rather stable social order by 1930, and thus set the stage for the rapid changes of the post-1950 era. Recruiters arrived regularly from Trinidad in search of conscripts, thereby driving some Ignacianos to flee into the forests and leading some patrones to ensconce their mozos. Such reactions notwithstanding, many Ignacianos saw combat in the northern Chaco, though fewer than might have otherwise had Beni troops not entered the campaign late. The war cast a pall over San Ignacio: the estancias and establecimientos suffered for want of labor, there were local food shortages, and a glum calm infected the religious

fiestas. The burden of labor was borne by women and males under seventeen or over forty years of age. Some effort was made by the government to sustain the local economy, however, for partidarios, or those (then Whites) who tended cattle on a shares basis, were exempted from military service.

Sixty-eight names of community war fatalities, at least thirty-nine of which represent Indians, appear on a memorial roster affixed to a wall of the church portico, but only casual inquiries among Ignacianos suggest the list to be very incomplete. Almost all of those Ignacianos who survived the war returned home, but they were not the same as before the campaign. It was the first time that most of them had been places and done things. Some were captured and taken to Paraguay, where they were made to contribute to the Paraguayan war effort by replacing laborers then serving at the front. There are Ignacianos who speak with affection of their Paraguayan captors and masters, who, they maintain, held the Benianos to be kindred to themselves and thus gave them preferential treatment over the hated highlanders. It was the first time for many Ignacianos to have close contact with highlanders, and veterans are quick to recall and comment disparagingly on how easily the highlanders became disoriented in the forest and how little they know about survival in the lowlands. Some of the veterans are freely critical of the officers under whom they served, citing their ignorance of local terrain and conditions as well as the caprice and

indifference with which they committed troops to enterprises which offered little prospect of success. Such comments by veterans suggest that perhaps a certain assertiveness theretofore alien to Ignacianos took form during the Chaco campaign. It was probably no coincidence that such veterans exercised the police function on behalf of even modest efforts to implement the Agrarian Reform in San Ignacio more than fifteen years later.

Once the war ended, the patrones were anxious to return to the pre-war labor and production regime on the ranches and sugar estates. But such was not to be. One old patrón, who lost the eight men employed on his ranches when the war came, regained only two of them at the close of the fighting. Whereas during the war personnel were physically absent, after the war they were recalcitrant and unwilling to work. For the rest of the decade and continuing through the 1940's, reports suggest frequent petty clashes between patrones and mozos. It was a time of restlessness for Ignacianos. It was also a period of intensifying political activity in the community, as parties and factions formed and clashed.

As both cause and consequence of such increased political activity, further national institutions arrived in San Ignacio after the close of the war. Capital only of the Third Section of Cercado Province until 1937, San Ignacio became capital of the newly-erected Moxos Province in that year. Whereas prior to this time the town had only a

corregidor and an agente municipal ("municipal agent"), there was now a subprefect, the maximum authority, and an alcalde ("mayor") to replace the municipal agent. An intendente de policia ("police intendant") was also added; the police function before had been exercised by the corregidor and agente municipal with the collaboration of low-ranking members of the native Cabildo who served as auxiliaries. It was also about this time, or soon thereafter, that the office of corregidor came to be occupied by an Indian, as it is today, rather than by a White. There is some evidence that this change was recommended by Father Marchena, who left San Ignacio to retire in 1942. The new status of the town also soon brought a civil registry.

The incubus of epidemic disease, especially smallpox and measles, which had operated to check Indian population numbers since the arrival of Europeans, continued into the post-war era. A severe smallpox epidemic erupted among Ignacianos shortly after the war, killing many and further adding to the restiveness of the times. Some efforts seem to have been made by the national government to improve the lot of the Ignacianos, for German Busch, president from 1937 to 1939, moved to declare the large forested area to the east of town a reserve for Indian settlement and agriculture, but little, so it seems was ever done to realize the plan. The acquisition of Indian cattle by local Whites continued apace after the war and during the 1950's. According to one

Ignaciano: "The rich brought everything to town and the poor Indians bought, exchanging cattle. A cow was commonly given for a set of three items: a hoe, an axe, and a machete."

Exploitation of the furs and pelts of wild fauna for commercial ends began about 1945, an activity that has continued with unabated frenzy to the present day. It was initially the hide of the large cayman that was valued, and later that of the small cayman (i.e., lagarto). The taking of caymans in those early years, however, was done mostly by Whites since the procedure was to hunt at night with a light, a practice alien to the Indians, who greatly feared the forests and lakes after dark. One of the largest buyers of cayman hides in those years was Casa Suárez. Other animals came to be sought in the 1950's, a matter to be taken up in a later chapter.

The first airstrip, known today as the pista grande ("large strip," as distinguished from a smaller private strip--the pista chica--used by local ranchers for their single-engine planes), was constructed in about 1947 for passenger flights of Lloyd Aéreo Boliviano (LAB), the national airline. Before that year, irregular passenger service was provided by LAB float planes that landed on the local lake. There were as then no meat flights, however, for the first commercial slaughter house was not built at the pista grande until about 1954.

Notes to Chapter III

<sup>1</sup>The settlement was moved to the plains of Grigotá in 1595, and moved yet again in 1622 to the site of San Lorenzo, a frontier outpost that had coexisted with Santa Cruz over the previous seventeen years. On the site of the modern-day city of Santa Cruz, Bolivia, the new amalgam came gradually to go by that name (Sanabria 1973a: 28-30).

<sup>2</sup>The first Jesuits, Diego Samaniego and Diego Martínez, arrived in Santa Cruz from Lima and Juli respectively in 1587 to begin apostolic work among the Spaniards of the town and Indians nearby. Two more Jesuits, Angelo Monitola and Jeronimo de Andión, were sent to Santa Cruz by the Provincial of Peru in 1590 (Astráin 1913: 521-23). Santa Cruz was made a bishopric by papal bull in 1605.

<sup>3</sup>The Moxos mission was the first "true" mission of the Jesuit Province of Peru since the latter's inception a century before. That is, apostolic efforts of the Society, albeit among Indians, had theretofore been in Spanish towns and were appendages of them and not, as in Moxos, carried out in the hinterlands of the new realm and in settlements that were themselves the exclusive creations of the Jesuits (Astráin 1920: 542). That the Moxos mission was not self-sustaining economically and thus totally independent of Jesuit enterprises of the Peruvian highlands and coast, however, is argued convincingly by the historian David Block (n.d.).

<sup>4</sup>Of now great topical interest for Amazonian prehistory are the extensive earthworks found over the Beni Department. These works include long terrepleins flanked by ditches that retain water during the dry season, raised "fields" on the pampas, platform mounds, and small circular water-filled depressions in forested zones. The terreplein-ditch complexes, often spanning vast stretches of pampa but also penetrating forested areas to some depth, are highly rectilinear and suggest keen engineering skills on the part of the builders. In at least one area known to the writer and lightly settled by Ignacianos, such a ditch, which communicates with Lake Isidoro near San Ignacio, is traversed by peasants in canoes as they move between the settlement area and town. And water is drawn by peasants from an artificial poza ("pond") in another area. Efforts by the writer to elicit information from Ignacianos concerning the origin or use of these earthworks were unavailing, though respondents invariably commented on the work that must have been required of the antiguos ("ancient ones") to build them. Also commented on frequently by Ignacianos was the quantity of shards, ceramic ware, and stone artifacts encountered in the forested area to the east



of San Ignacio and north of the highway. This area is relatively heavily settled today and may also have been in pre-Columbian times. No mention was ever made of the pampas having been cultivated at any time in the past.

It is the writer's opinion, therefore, that the general use and construction of the earthworks considerably antedate the arrival of Europeans. The best description of the earthworks as well as the first documentation of their locations and impressive extent are to be found in the monograph by the geographer William Denevan (1966). In addition to earlier mound excavations in the area by Nordenskiöld and Rydén (see Denevan's bibliography), surface collections and limited systematic excavations have been made over the past couple or three years by a multi-national team of archaeologists under an agreement subscribed by the Bolivian Instituto de Arqueología, the Universidad de La Plata of Argentina, and the Smithsonian Institution. Data, however, are still highly fragmentary and to date are contained mostly in unpublished field reports. As of this writing, neither ethnic affiliations nor dates are available to identify the builders or locate them in time. It is certain, though, that prehistoric societies of some complexity existed in this unique region of Amazonia.

<sup>5</sup>According to Denevan (1966: 95), the early explorers and Jesuits never mentioned savannah farming. However, Tormo and Tercero cite a descripción of the province, of unknown authorship and dated 1754, in which the Indians of Moxos "made their gardens on the pampa by opening furrows and piling up dirt. A stone or bronze wedge (cuña) was sometimes used to clear low forest growth. . . ." But the author goes on to say that "the Indians preferred forested areas for gardens because fewer weeds (maleza) were found there than on the pampa. Also, fire consumed the roots of weeds and the ash helped to fertilize the earth" (Tormo and Tercero 1966: 97; my translation).

<sup>6</sup>The critical importance of material goods, especially steel tools, to the establishment of initial relations with the Indians and to the reduction and proselytization process throughout the mission period is emphasized by David Block (n.d.). Alfred Métraux (1959) notes the role of steel edgetools as an important basis for relations between lowland native peoples of South America and Europeans. Oral histories among Ignacianos suggest that Whites in that area obtained Indian cattle in the second quarter of the present century in exchange for such items as axes and machetes. And the writer, who accompanied a comerciante to a group of unacculturated and remotely situated Chimanes to the southwest of San Ignacio in 1978, observed that steel cutting tools were the principal item which they were receiving for skins and furs.

<sup>7</sup> This settlement was founded by the Juan de la Hoz Otálora expedition in 1668 and used by Father Bermudo and Juan de Soto. Located on the Guapay just to the northwest of its confluence with the Piray, it would seem that the settlement was at or near the southernmost reaches of the territory of the Moxos proper since the expedition was received by Moxos Indians at the confluence (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 18). Another settlement by the same name, very short-lived, was founded on the Guapay by the Juan Mendoza Mate de Luna expedition of 1603 (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 18; Métraux 1942: 57). Neither of these settlements, however, should be confused with the Jesuit mission town of Trinidad, founded on the Mamofe in 1687.

<sup>8</sup> Created in 1559, the Audiencia of Charcas, with seat in Chuquisaca (La Plata; Sucre), was the supreme administrative and judicial authority in Alto Peru (Bolivia) during the three centuries of colonial rule. Included in this administrative territory was the Jesuit Province of Moxos, which was overseen by the governor of Santa Cruz, Audiencia authority for the regions of Moxos and Chiquitos. Although within the territorial jurisdiction of the Bishopric of Santa Cruz, the missions themselves were governed by a superior who lived in one of the towns (first Loreto, then San Pedro) and reported to Lima, seat of the Jesuit Province of Peru. The Superior of Moxos was largely independent, however, of both the Society's residency in Santa Cruz and the bishopric there. In 1776, subsequent to the expulsion of the Society (in 1767), the territory formerly administered by the Audiencia of Charcas passed to the superintendency of the newly created Viceroyalty of La Plata with seat in Buenos Aires (Muñoz Reyes 1977: 158; Vázquez Machicado et. al 1963: 94-95, 226).

<sup>9</sup> These early studies of Marbán resulted in the construction of a Moxo grammar and vocabulary, first published in Lima in 1701. Sophisticated and skillfully done even by today's standards, the work was republished in 1894. In it appears also a catechism, in both Spanish and Moxo, tailored to the Moxo culture.

<sup>10</sup> Seasonal flooding, however, forced a relocation of the settlement on the eve of the visita of Father Juan José de Zabala (Zabala 1964: 181).

<sup>11</sup> Wheat was never successfully cultivated by the Jesuits in Moxos, though it seems that grapevines did achieve a modest success in certain areas (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 74). According to Denevan (1966: 32), the Jesuits found the Indians cultivating a sweet cane when they arrived; and there is an Ignaciano term--acútena--for sugar cane. "Rice," by contrast,

is arruz, a corruption of the Spanish arroz. There were certainly no plows in the areas visited by the writer, and no mention of them in the context of Ignaciano agriculture was ever made in the course of numerous and extensive oral histories.

<sup>12</sup> Both Trinitario and Ignaciano are by convention held to be Moxo dialects. According to Mr. Willis Ott (personal communication), a missionary linguist with the Summer Institute of Linguistics who has worked among Ignacianos and with their dialect for many years, Ignaciano and Trinitario represent dialects that have diverged in post-Jesuit times from a standardized Moxo adopted by the Jesuits. It is also likely, he adds, that the aboriginal languages (which seem not to have been Moxo in these missions) of the mission charges have influenced the Moxo as received from the Jesuits. While the writer did not pursue this matter systematically or to any depth, casual analysis of words as well as informant responses to offhand inquiries suggest much similarity between the two dialects. Most Ignaciano informants claimed that they could understand many words of Trinitario but could not follow a conversation. However, a brief period of sustained social intercourse between speakers of the respective dialects seems to lead to mutual intelligibility. Such intercourse is quite common in communities on the River Apére--e.g., Santa Rosa and Pueblo Nuevo--and at no time did the writer observe or hear tell of a linguistic barrier (or one of costumbres in general) to interaction, including marriage, between the two groups.

<sup>13</sup> Alcides Parejas (1976: 39), on the other hand, following Egaña (1966: 915), writes that each family head received a plot for cultivation, the entire harvest of which entered a communal fund controlled by the priests. Foodstuffs from the fund, in addition to clothes, medicines, a meat ration and what not, were then distributed fortnightly to each family. No mention is made of a chacra del cura. According to Vargas Ugarte (1964: 71), each family was assigned a plot to cultivate and was obliged to contribute to a communal fund only that portion of the harvest not needed for family maintenance. The communal fund functioned much as the one described above.

<sup>14</sup> David Block cites a document from the Archivo de Indias in which port officials at Cádiz in 1736 clear a cargo bound for Moxos via Panamá which included "226 cases of books reviewed by the Inquisition, prizes for the Indian students, a considerable multitude of images and sacred medals, beads, knives, axes, scabbards, files, needles, fishhooks, and other trifles for the attraction and concentration of gentiles and neophytes" (Block n.d.; Block's translation).

15 The precise status of all of the pampa land within the territory of the province is not clear. In the passage just cited, however reference is made to lands "destined for common use."

16 According to Ashburn (1947: 147), mal de costado refers probably to either pneumonia or pleurisy.

17 The residents of Santa Cruz must also have posed a problem for the missions, for the governor of Santa Cruz, Cayetano Hurtado Dávila, entered the province about 1715 and took from among the Itonamas about 2,000 captives, the protests of the missionaries notwithstanding (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 77). Such raids by Cruzeños seem to have occurred with some frequency.

18 Located to the southeast of Moxos, the missions of Chiquitos were administered by the Jesuit Province of Paraguay.

19 The Jesuits burned the mission archives before departing the province (Parejas 1976: 42).

20 With the gradual opening of the province to traders and others, the Indians came to express a great interest in and desire for European dress forms, a pattern which has continued with great vitality to the present day among Ignacianos. The tipoy, or toga, was the standard garment for both men (called camijeta when worn by men) and women during the Jesuit era, and is still worn by some of the women, though now only on ceremonial occasions by the older men. According to Parejas (1976: 83), the Indians made great sacrifices for certain European textiles, their own skill in the elaboration of cotton textiles notwithstanding. Brittany cloth (bretaña) was sought for men's shirts, while European cloths (géneros) were in demand for women's dresses.

21 It should be noted that this figure contrasts sharply with that of 18,535 (Vargas Ugarte 1964: 147), deriving from a census conducted by Aymerich in 1768. Parejas (1974: 75) remarks on the great variation in such reported population figures for the post-Jesuit period, and enjoines care in their use.

22 The other cantones of Sécore were Exaltación, Santa Ana, and San José (Burton 1978: 39).

23 Clements Markham, at the request of the British India Office, took seeds and seedlings of Cinchona from Peru to south India in 1859, thus laying the foundation for the later cheap quinine production in Southeast Asia (Fifer 1972: 109).

<sup>24</sup> The reader is here cautioned that the term "Mojo" was understood throughout the Upper Amazon at the time to refer to any Indian of the Beni plains and not necessarily to a speaker of the language of that same name.

<sup>25</sup> In the year of this report, 1887, a group of Jesuits left Trinidad to try and calm insurrectionary Indians who had abandoned the town and convince them that the authorities were trying to improve their plight (René-Moreno 1974: 79). Rivero was presumably among them.

<sup>26</sup> A reference, presumably, to the reforms, already discussed, that dismantled the communal structures of the missions and made the Indians independent agents following the creation of the Beni Department.

<sup>27</sup> The pertinent data for the indicated years are given below as a series of four figures for each year. The first figure of the set refers to the number of White births registered in that year, the second figure to the number of Indian births with White godparents, while the last figure of the set is the percentage of White births to total births registered in that year. 1889: 0, 138, 0, 0; 1890: 0, 142, 0, 0; 1900: 3, 103, 0, 2.8; 1905: 17, 100, 0, 14.5; 1910: 16, 131, 3, 10.9; 1915: 28, 135, 0, 17.2; 1920: 86, 131, 10, 39.6; 1925: 71, 103, 2, 40.8; 1930: 110, 118, 0, 48.2; 1935: 71, 110, 0, 39.2; 1940: 100, 98, 1, 50.5; 1945: 60, 133, 3, 31.1; 1950: 63, 170, 2, 27.0; 1955: 77, 220, 15, 25.9; 1960: 80, 188, 4, 29.8; 1965: 38, 265, 5, 12.5; 1970: 45, 120, 27, 27.3; 1975: 133, 214, 50, 38.3; 1977: 159, 254, 51, 38.5.

These figures must be interpreted with caution for a variety reasons. Firstly, while until recent years the "race" of the birth was indicated by the priest in the baptismal entry, later entries bore no such indication and thus had to be classified. A literate Ignaciano training for the priesthood, however, assisted the writer by classifying the later entries on the basis of surname and his knowledge of community families. Nonetheless, there exists the possibility that a few of the Hispanic surnames that also belong to Indians in the community were not so classified, thus slightly understating the number of Indian births registered in recent years. Secondly, the lag between a birth and its registry is occasionally such that the two events occur in different years. The years above, however, are years of registry, not years of birth. Among the Indians there is a keen sense of urgency to baptize a child once born; in the early years of this century, before population dispersion, children were usually baptized by a priest within only houses of birth, and in any case within the first three days. After 1950, with population dispersion and the formation of outlying settlements, the lag time increased though this increase was perhaps

limited somewhat beginning in the 1960's, when the priest in San Ignacio began visiting the larger outlying settlements once per year to administer the sacraments to those who did not often visit the town. While such a keen sense of urgency for baptism of children is not found among Whites, and certainly not among the small group of Protestants (a few of which are Indian), who do not baptize babies at all, Whites do faithfully submit their children to the rite; indeed, before the creation of Moxos Province in 1937 and the subsequent opening of a civil registry in San Ignacio, the parish registry was the only vehicle for recording births. This is all to say, then, that any given year of the parish baptismal registry, especially after 1950, will include a few entries reflecting actual births in previous years. But on the other hand, however, any given year would also fail to reflect *pari passu* (so it is argued) actual births for that year, so that the figures appearing above do approximate quite closely actual births for the indicated years. Thirdly, the figures for Indian birth entries since about 1960 include numerous Trinitarios settled on the Rivers Apére and Cabito. While there were also many Trinitario refugees in this remote upriver region prior to 1950, the writer doubts that they baptized their children in San Ignacio (if they used a priest at all); and certainly no priest from the town entered that remote area prior to the 1960's. And lastly, any inference of relative ethnic (i.e., whether Indian or European) composition from relative birth entries necessarily assumes a certain equivalence of the two sectors of the community in terms of fertility and sexual practices. Without responding to this problem directly, the writer would only point out that the priest of San Ignacio reported (Mendizabal 1932: 248) a population of the community in about 1930 composed of 2,500 blancos ("Whites") and 2,580 indios ("Indians"). Whites, that is, accounted for 49.2 percent of the population, a figure at only slight variance with that of 48.2 percent derived from the relative birth entries for 1930. The writer would argue, then, that the baptismal entries do approximately reflect, at least until 1950, and perhaps thereafter, the ethnic composition of the community.

<sup>28</sup> A tutuma, or tutumada, is the measure obtained by filling to the brim a half-section of gourd from the tutumo (Crescentia cujete), a low tree found at most house sites. Such a quantity of cacao beans, known among the Indians of the time as a medida ("measure"), sometimes corrupted to media, was a unit of value, so that the cost of items was often expressed in terms of medidas. The lyrics of a once-popular Ignaciano melody make reference to the tutuma measure. Following the Spanish translation of the lyrics appearing in Becerra (1977: 305):

Dame, dame mi tutuma  
para medir el chocolate.  
Como soy pobre  
nadie me quiere.

Give me, give me mi tutuma  
To measure chocolate.  
Since I'm poor  
Nobody loves me. (my translation)

#### CHAPTER IV SAN IGNACIO: A BICULTURAL COMMUNITY

Two cultures, the one Indian and the other Hispanic, coexist and comprise the community of San Ignacio de Moxos. The character of the former derives from the highly directed acculturative influences of Jesuit missionaries on native Amazonian society for a century during Spanish colonial times. The latter, by contrast, the smattering of highlanders present notwithstanding, is a version of Hispanic culture that took form in colonial Santa Cruz de la Sierra and that began to enter San Ignacio with Cruzeño immigrants just before the close of the last century. Although giving relatively greater emphasis to the native to the native sector of the community, this chapter seeks to portray the dual character of San Ignacio and to show something of how each sector relates to the other.

##### Physical and Attitudinal Manifestations of a Dual Community

According to the 1976 census, the town of San Ignacio has 3,000 inhabitants. One informed estimate holds that Ignacianos comprise from 50 to 80 percent of the town population. The remainder of the town is of Hispanic culture. As already noted, however, most of the between 5,000 and 7,000 Ignacianos do not reside in San Ignacio but rather in one of the twenty-seven or so named settlements or zones

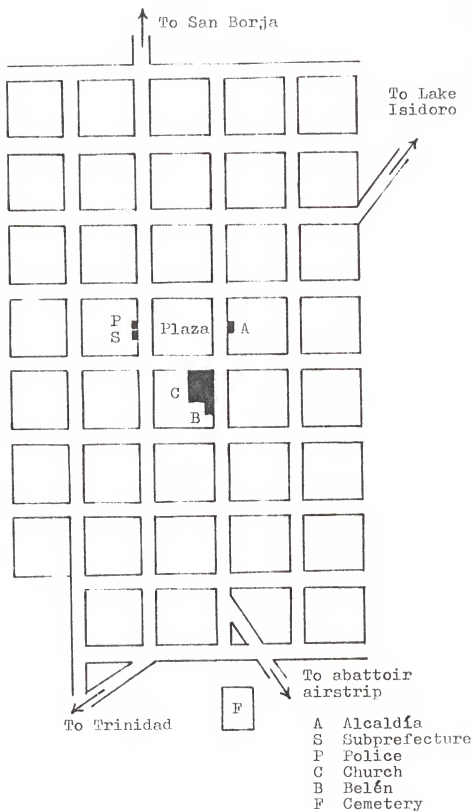


Figure 3. The Town of San Ignacio



that depend on the town. And there are also Ignacianos who reside on and work the local cattle ranches.

The cultural duality of San Ignaciano is reflected in both the apportionment of space in the town and the structures erected in that space. The physical plan of the town is Spanish, with a large plaza--the only--at the center surrounded by a grid street pattern. The more central area of the town, including the plaza, belongs to and is dominated by the White (or Hispanic) sector of the community. The plaza is White space par excellence and is little used by the Indians, many of whom approach it with a certain timidity. The tiling and fluorescent lighting of the plaza were completed in 1978 at a reputed cost of about \$85,000. Much of this money came from national coffers, but much also came from private individuals, including a sizeable donation from the president of Bolivia, General Hugo Banzer Suárez, after whom the plaza is named and whose bust stands on the side facing the Alcadía ("Municipal House"). Perhaps more than anything else, it is the new plaza that is now a symbol of community progress and enlightenment, a symbol of "civilization," to the White sector of San Ignacio.

Fronting one side of the plaza is the church, a structure whose space is somewhat of an exception to the rule of White dominance at the center. The church may well be the only place in town that can accommodate both White and Indian such that each experiences a sense of ease. The Belén, on the other hand, a native ceremonial house and meeting place

of the Indian Cabildo located at the street-side rear of the church compound, is exclusively Indian space. Despite its significance to native society and its inextricable relation to the church, elements of the White sector have in recent years made unavailing efforts to have it removed to the periphery of the town, arguing that the fiestas there are loud and debauched and therefore a threat to the peace and respectability of the community.

Fronting the plaza opposite the church is a large two-story house that belongs to a rancher reputed to be the wealthiest man of the province. The Alcadía and the Subprefecture face each other and front the plaza on the remaining two sides. A contingent of Mounted Police, a branch of the National Guard found in the lowland cattle regions, shares the subprefectural premises. Other buildings facing the plaza include private homes, the fronts of some of which serve as stores, that are owned and occupied by the local White elite.

The Indian residential zones are mostly at the low-lying and flood-prone periphery of the town. This, however, has not always been so. There were Indian houses facing the grassy plaza as late as 1930, and many older Ignacianos well remember when the majority of the houses there belonged to Indians. The walls of native huts are typically of tacuara bamboo slats secured with bast lashings; the interstices are often daubed with mud mixed with cow dung

(for cohesion), while the roof is of motacú palm thatch. The walls of the typical White domicile, by contrast, are of adobe brick, often plastered with either concrete or a mixture of clay and dung and washed white with kaolin. The roof is of red clay tiles.

Perhaps nowhere in the town is the cultural (and economic) rift between Indians and Whites more sharply reflected than at the local cemetery, where the grave markers of one sector abruptly give way to those of the other. Indian graves, occupying the greater part of the ground, are marked only by low wooden crosses on which obituary data are scrawled in faded white lettering. White graves, by contrast, are often marked by cement structures, quite elaborate and quite large in the case of a few families of elite status. The cemetery is zoned, with Indian burials consigned to the area well to the rear of the main entrance, where the right to a plot can be had for about fifty cents payable to the Alcaldía. Older Ignacianos count the cemetery among their numerous losses to Whites over the years and sometimes reminisce nostalgically of the days when the cemetery belonged to Ignacianos and when there were no burial fees. In those times the priest was the only non-Indian who intervened at death.

Cultural duality in San Ignacio is manifested not only physically but also attitudinally. Both Whites and Ignacianos have differential perceptions of themselves and of each

other. An Ignaciano thinks of all other Ignacianos as nu-háneanana, or "my relatives." The term is employed regardless of whether or not the referent individual is an actual consanguineal or affinal. Commensurate with a general increase in the use of Spanish in recent years, however, the term pariente ("relative") is now often used instead.

The Ignaciano ethnic self-identity seems to derive in part from a consideration of both the bárbaro, or unacculturated forest Indian, and the White. Ignacianos view the bárbaro much as do Whites, though their behavior toward him may contrast markedly from that of Whites. The bárbaro is held to be lacking in a series of traits that serve to define civilización, or civilizados ("civilized people"): he eats seated on the ground; he hunts with the bow and arrow; he wears bark-cloth clothes; he lacks saints and priests and does not have fiestas; he does not baptize his children and has no religion; he is shy and often quick to flee when approached by a civilizado; and he lives in the forest and does not form pueblos (i.e., nucleated settlements). Such views of the bárbaro notwithstanding, Ignacianos do not always demean them. Some Ignacianos, especially those of the upriver area, have had sporadic contact with Chimanes, an unacculturated tribal group settled on affluents of the River Apère and Cabito to the southwest of San Ignacio. It is often recognized by these Ignacianos that the Chimán is valiente, or "hard-working," and that the Chimán is never without

meat. It is the writer's impression that a kind of ambivalence characterizes the Ignaciano attitude toward the Chíman: his tribal culture is deemed inferior, but Chimán efforts to cope with the environment, especially to procure food, are considerably more effectual than are those of Ignacianos, who thus reserve for the Chimanés a certain admiration.

Ignacianos refer to Whites as caraiyana (singular carai), a term they gloss into Spanish as gente blanca ("white people").<sup>1</sup> But they also sometimes use los blancos ("the Whites"), or often los ricos ("the rich"), a term synonymous with "rancher" from the Ignaciano point of view. Ignacianos not only view Whites as intruders, but see them also as immoral, as irreligious and irreverent, as lacking in respect for the saints, and as having a corruptive influence on the community. They may be further described as mezquino, or "stingy," a degrading term that Ignacianos occasionally employ to refer to each other. It is a bad thing indeed to be mezquino, and those who are so regarded may also be referred to as el Diablo ("the Devil"), an epithet with highly negative connotations. Most Ignacianos agree that a good patrón, for example, is hard to find since most of them are stingy. The use of this term by Ignacianos may, however, be recent, for some of the older people say that patrones in their time, when foodstuffs and other items were not so carefully measured and rationed, were far less stingy than those of today.

From the White point of view, the Ignaciano is the camba, or "rustic," a term that is more or less pejorative depending on the usage. The zenith of detraction is probably expressed by the epithet camba de mierda ("shit camba"). The term indio ("Indian") is used by many Whites, though a few consider it inapt, at least for polite circles, and prefer indígena ("indigene") instead. Ignacianos collectively are sometimes referred to as los pobres ("the poor"), or as the gente humilde ("humble people"); the latter designation seemingly seeks to attribute some virtue to an otherwise unenviable lot. Two terms, taita and máma, are used with great frequency by Whites to refer to Indians. A taita is an Indian male of about fifty years of age or older, while a máma is an Indian female of that age. It must be stressed, however, that these terms do not belong to the local native language and are not used by Ignacianos save to assume a White frame of reference when conversing with Whites. In the Indian language the appropriate terms of reference (and address) for any mature (married) male or female are táta and méme respectively. These terms also denote paternity, and thus mean "father" and "mother."

Although thought by Whites to be docile, pacific, and non-treacherous in contrast to Trinitarios, Ignacianos are nonetheless held to be shiftless, unreliable, ignorant, superstitious, and given to the intemperate use of alcohol. Whites of the area often speak of the camba flojo ("lazy camba").

The words of one local White reflect the attitude:

The Indians here are lazy, they will not work. I've been trying for a month to find one to do some work for me; I go often to the area of the church in search of someone, but nothing. La polftica ("politics") has brought this state of affairs about: politicians give them alcohol in order to get their vote, thus corrupting them and making them lazy drunkards.

It is amazing how the Indians survive on the diet they have; it's as if they derive their sustenance from the very air. And the women continue to bear child after child, many of which die; a day doesn't pass here but what an Indian child dies. They are so ignorant and don't know how to care for children.

Many of them are still primitive. Their customs are such a mystery to us; nobody knows what goes on in their homes. We only see them as they walk quietly in the streets.

They are so lazy that they won't produce food to sell here. They used to work [i.e., before the Agrarian Reform]: women spun and wove and men worked in agriculture. They were clean then, always with white clothes. Now they are so dirty.

But perhaps people who live as they do, having nothing and wanting nothing, are the happiest of all. We Whites are always aspiring.

In the words of another local White:

The Indian here is without ambition. If he has his plantains and a little yuca, he's quite content--and, of course, his chicha, for he likes to drink chicha and make fiesta very much. Something still remains of the savage in him, he's still semi-savage.

Whites cling with great tenacity to the notion that the Indian is a being fit only for manual labor. For him

to indulge in the slightest relaxation is often sufficient to elicit the charge of indolence from Whites, some of whom argue that only labor from sunrise to sunset (as before the Agrarian Reform) is the just due of the Indian. Shortly before this field research began, the native residents of an upriver settlement petitioned school authorities to provide them with a certain Indian rural school teacher, one of the few in the entire region. Those efforts, however, were blocked by White teachers (who are also traders) in the settlement, who argued successfully before authorities that one Indian could not teach another and that the job of the Indian was to work the land, for only in that way could a community progress.

Such White attitudes notwithstanding, there are individual Indians, termed by Whites racionales ("rational"), who for their willingness and ability to operate in accordance with White demands and expectations are singled out as exceptions to the stereotype portrayed above. While such individuals are typically bilingual and bicultural, the defining feature of the people so classified seems to be their willingness and ability to function under White dominance. It is the hombre racional ("rational man"), therefore, who is sought by Whites to work the ranches and fill other labor positions.

In more general terms, then, the White views the Indian as a burden to the community and a threat to



enlightenment and progress. He is further seen as a qualitatively distinctive variety of humanity, a variety deemed inferior and often characterized as childlike and unable to live without White supervision and direction. Moreover, Whites hold this inferior status of the Indian to be biologically fixed. Indeed, the biological contribution to human behavior is deemed very significant by Whites, who often cite some past instance of miscegenation in the genealogy of another White in order to account for that individual's episodes of egregious conduct.

It is in light of this negative view of the Indian held by Whites, together with the latter's relative lack of access to local power and resources, that much native behavior toward the White must be understood. Ignacianos are notoriously timid in the presence of Whites and deferential toward them. An Indian woman calling at a White house to sell or exchange some petty quantity of garden produce, for example, waits shyly at the door before being told by the lady of the house, "Enter, don't be ashamed." During the writer's early days in the community Ignacianos sometimes prefaced their often eloquent and detailed response to his inquiries with comments like, "I'm only a poor Indian and don't know much."

#### Mythology and the Native View of the Physical Environment

The belief system of Ignacianos involves both medieval Iberian and native Amazonian elements. In close proximity

to a well developed cult of the saints exist strong beliefs in spirits that inhabit and to some degree control the natural environment. While Ignacianos subscribe to the Biblical creation myth, numerous other explanatory myths are clearly pre-Hispanic in origin, or at least contain important elements of such origin. It is with the native side of the belief system, and even then with only a small part of it, that this section is concerned.

The discussion will open by relating two myths, the first of which purports to explain the relocation of San Ignacio from a former to the current site. The former site, located near the River Séreno to the southeast of town, is known today by Ignacianos as Pueblo Viejo ("Old Town"); a few remains of the old mission are still in evidence there. Some Ignacianos who presently reside in the area of the old mission claim to occasionally hear from there at night the sound of bells, or the music of flutes, drums, and ankle rattles of Macheteros. The reader is reminded once more that San Ignacio has been twice moved since its inception, once during Jesuit times and again--to the current site--in 1816. The version of the relocation myth to follow, translated by the writer from Ignaciano Spanish, was related by a ranking member of the native Cabildo.

Before, San Ignacio was where Pueblo Viejo is now. There was a lake near Pueblo Viejo with very black water, not clear water like that of Isidoro [i.e., the large lake near the current San Ignacio], and in which lived a snake-like creature [the mauwáwaru of

the lake, to be explained shortly] as big as a house. People would often leave the pueblo to work in their gardens near the lake and disappear, a real problem since the pueblo was thus losing many people.

One day a taita [i.e., a senior Indian male] left the town in search of his team of oxen that had wandered off. He walked and walked, and finally came upon the oxen in an area of high ground, a place ideal for a pueblo since there was much forest for making gardens. He also found a cross erected there on which appeared the words "San Ignacio de Loyola."

The taita returned to the pueblo with his oxen and told of the ideal place to his family, who in the meantime had concluded that he had been devoured by the snake-like creature. He also told the cacique [i.e., head of the native cabildo] about the place and suggested that a party be dispatched to appraise it as a potential site for a new pueblo, for the people wanted so much to escape the dreaded creature.

A party was sent by the cacique to the place described by the old man but could find nothing; this was so because the place was enchanted (encatado) and could not be found or seen by just anybody. The cacique, thinking that the old man had lied, ordered that he be brought before the cabildo and flogged for maliciousness.

Another man soon thereafter left the town to work his garden, but then decided to hunt down and destroy the creature that had swallowed so many people. He encountered the beast, but was also swallowed by it. Once inside the belly of the beast, he found there all the people from the pueblo. He then began to slash wildly with his machete at the viscera of the creature until it weakened and left the lake in search of a place to die. The beast at last expired in a place called Yaperéji ("Place of Bones"), so named because its bones lie there to this day. Yaperéji was quite near the Loma Santa ("Sacred Rise"), or current site of

San Ignacio and site formerly proposed by the old man for resettlement.

The people then emerged through the mouth of the great beast and wandered [northward; Yaperéji is to the south of the current San Ignacio] until they encountered the area of high ground reported earlier by the old man in search of his oxen. The people were much impressed with the place and returned to the pueblo to tell of their find to the cacique.

The Lord (el Señor) took pity on those who had been swallowed by the beast and disenchanted the sacred high ground, thereby revealing it to them. The cacique then led the entire pueblo, with their cattle and belongings, to the new site. Thus the current San Ignacio began.

The second myth here recounted, the particular version supplied by an Ignaciano man of about sixty-five years of age, refers to the origin of Lake Isidoro (sometimes corrupted by Ignacianos to "Isirere") near to San Ignacio.

They say that the area where the lake now is was once upon a time covered with pools (pozas), curiches, and yomomos. Some of the pools were free of aquatic plants and thus brimmed with wachére and yayú (kinds of food fish commonly found in such pools). It was in such pools that the women often fished with the chipa (a discoid cotton scoop-net).

One day a group of women gathered to fish in the nearby pools, and among them was a woman with her young son, whose name was Isidoro. The lad sat on the bank guarding the fish in the asayé (carring basket of palm leaf) from vultures while his mother fished in the pool with the chipa.

The asayé was full when the mother of Isidoro decided to go with the other women of the group to another pool to catch yet more fish. The lad was left alone on the bank with the basket.

When the mother returned with another asayé filled with fish, the lad had disappeared. The á'eana ("water spirits") had come to claim him shortly after his mother left him alone on the bank. The mother began to call, "Isidoro, Isidoro," but there was only silence as she wandered among the pools calling for the child.

The faint cry of "Mother . . ." came at last as the child responded from the waters. "To where have you gone? Where have you hidden?" inquired the mother as she continued to call his name. But she could only hear from afar, "Mother . . . Mother . . ." and knew that the á'eana had taken the child. The spirits had already sealed the pool where he was with a thick surface mat of aquatic growth.

Isidoro has been made to work by the á'eana until the present day to unite the dispersed pools and thus form the lake which bears his name. Isidoro is still busy, for the lake continues to grow, ever pushing back the forest along the shore.

Ignacianos believe strongly in spirits, and the spirit world includes those of the air, the forest, the pampa, and the water. The spirits that seem to most influence human behavior, however, are two: the ichñiana (singular ichñi), or spirits of the forest, and the á'eana (singular á'e), or spirits of the water.

The ichñiana, a term usually glossed into Spanish by Ignacianos as gente del monte, or "people of the forest," are often described by them as "people like us." For at least one old man, the ichñiana are fallen angels. Ichñi is also the word for "jaguar" in Ignaciano and it is believed that the spirit can assume either cat or human form. The human form is often that of one's closet friend, which the

ichfni feigns in order to attend fiestas and drink chicha (a kind of beer, usually made with corn, though occasionally also made with manioc, sweet potatoes, or plantains), for which the spirit has a great liking. It is during nocturnal chicha bouts that one can be lured into the forest and lost by such a spirit-friend. The curandero-ativino ("curer-diviner") among Ignaciaons learns his art and derives his power from the ichfni. Further, all animals of the forest belong to these spirits, animals which are often described by Indians as "the cattle of the ichfni."

Also portrayed as "people like us" are the á'eana, or water spirits, which are apt to exist in any body of water, from the largest lake to the smallest puddle on the streets of San Ignacio after a rain. A'eana are likewise found in the white mists that often linger above the forest in the early morning hours. A'eana is also the Ignaciano term for "rainbow," a form found frequently in the skies from late October through December, when brief showers, or mangones, prelude the onset of heavy rains in January. The rainbow is sometimes described as the "flag" of the á'eana. Just as the ichfni are the "owners" of the animals of the forest, so the á'eana are the owners and masters of all fish and aquatic creatures, and can assume their forms.

Held to inhabit all rivers, streams, and each lake of the region is a mauwáwaru, a term which Ignacianos translate as fiera ("brutish beast") or jichi, a native

term of probable Tupí origin<sup>2</sup> with wide currency in the lowlands of Bolivia (see Sanabria 1975: 87). This fabulous creature, with both natural and supernatural attributes, is typically described as a viborón ("hugh snake"), or caimanángo ("huge cayman"), or even ballena ("whale"), a creature about which Ignacianos have learned from the Biblical story. The mauwáwaru exercises a stabilizing influence on bodies of water; if the mauwáwaru leaves its lake home, for example, the lake dries up, and now-dry depressions that were once lakes are so explained by Ignacianos. The mauwáwaru can also become restless, or angry, and summon a wind to cause the waters of any lake to swell and surge ominously, a matter of much concern to those who cross them in native dugouts of shallow draft. Such a perturbed state of the creature is perpetual in some lakes, which Ignacianos refer to as lagunas bravas ("angry lakes"), and these they approach with great trepidation if at all. Some residents of a settlement near any lake ever abide in the fear that the waters will without warning leave their bounds and destroy the settlement.

Man must strive to live in harmony with the spirits, who can bring him great harm. While the ichfiniana are widely viewed as rogues who delight in misplacing one's things or clandestinely drinking one's chicha they can also bewitch and cause sickness and death. And so it is with the á'eana. Much sickness among Ignacianos is attributed

to bewitchment by these spirits. The verb flechar ("to arrow") is often used to describe the actual mechanism of bewitchment, but the intended image seems to be more that of a shower of darts targeted by the spirit.

Aside from avoiding certain proscribed behavior which incurs the wrath of the spirits, a series of protective measures are available to man, who must of necessity live and work in close proximity to a wide variety of malevolent or potentially malevolent entities. Some of these measures come from the native side of the belief system, others from the European side. Black tobacco, for example, a plant with many uses among Ignacianos, is held to frighten away both the ichñiana and the á'eana. Accordingly, Ignacianos feel very vulnerable when walking through the forest or crossing a lake unless they are puffing on a cigarette. Parents even place tobacco in the pockets of small children to protect them at such times.

#### Socio-Cultural Forms of a Dual Community

The social structure that serves to organize the community of San Ignacio is really a composite of two distinctive social structures that mutually articulate only imperfectly. On the one hand there are the organizational forms and social groupings of the Indian sector which date mainly from the Jesuit era. On the other hand there are the forms and groupings that are more properly of the Hispanic



sector. Many of these latter date from about 1937, when San Ignacio became capital of the newly-created Moxos Province. It was not until that year that the full complex of Bolivian administrative institutions began to arrive in San Ignacio.

As capital of Moxos Province, San Ignacio is the seat of the corresponding Subprefecture. The resident subprefect, who reports to the departmental prefect in Trinidad, is in a formal sense the highest ranking administrative authority in the province. Sharing a building with the Subprefecture is a unit of the Mounted Police, a branch of the National Guard found throughout the lowland cattle regions. The unit is commanded by a capitán ("captain"), who has at his disposal a couple or three carabineros ("carabineers"). The town of San Ignacio is administered by the Alcaldía, a municipal government apparatus consisting of an alcalde ("mayor") and three or four functionaries. Both the subprefect and the alcalde receive their appointments from La Paz, a practice consistent with the high degree of government centralization in Bolivia.

While these institutions of Bolivian national society theoretically govern the entire community of San Ignacio, in practice they co-govern with a set of traditional institutions that have regulated community life among the Indians since Jesuit times. Indeed, it is only this second set of institutions which most Ignacianos understand and to which they can relate.

The native sector of San Ignacio is inextricably organized about the local church. At the center of this politico-religious structure is the Cabildo ("Ruling Council"), the traditional Indian governing body. The Cabildo is composed of eight (excluding the corregidor and his second) distinctive ranked offices, or cargos, which are filled by about thirty men. At the head of the Cabildo is the cacique. Each office (except that of comisario) is really held by two men, the regular official and his second, or surrogate, who serves when the former is incapacitated or otherwise unable to attend to the duties of office. About half of the Cabildo members are comisarios (who have no seconds), the lowest ranking cargo of the Cabildo. The term of office for all officials is one year, though officials can and do succeed themselves in the same office. The incumbent of each office is charged with finding a successor to that office, but the full Cabildo, and especially the cacique, must approve the final nomination. Former caciques, while not a part of the formal Cabildo organization in any given year, are entitled to attend all Cabildo meetings, where they are given seats of honor. They participate in the meetings as well as in all important decisions affecting the native community.

Not everyone in the Cabildo rises to the rank of cacique, and not all caciques have moved stepwise through all of the lower cargos. One could not, however, go from

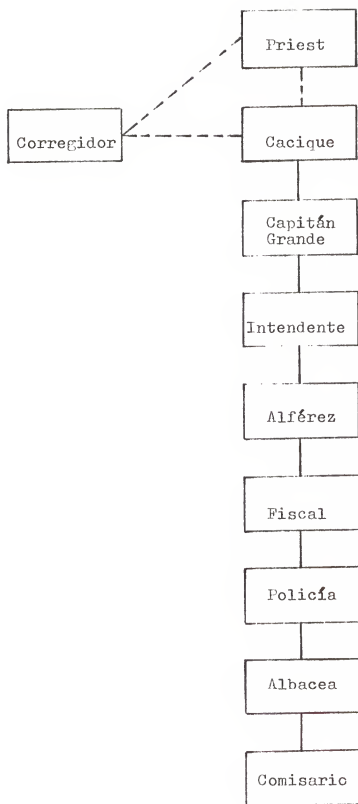


Figure 4. The Cabildo Hierarchy

comisario to cacique, but one of proven moral worth and service to the community could move from a mid-level cargo to that of cacique. Those men exercising the higher offices, therefore, tend to be older.

On formal occasions, such as religious processions or Sunday morning Mass, Cabildo members carry black canes of office distinguished by rank. The canes are publicly consecrated and given individually to each member of the Cabildo at the beginning of the year by the priest, who reminds the recipient of the gravity and responsibilities of the office, and admonishes him to excute his duties accordingly.

Other groups are also important to the politico-religious structure of the native community. The Músicos ("Musicians") are an essential ingredient of all Masses and religious functions. Directed by a maestro de capilla ("chapel master"), an office to which attaches great prestige, the group is composed of violinists, flautists, drummers, panpipers, and chanters. There are about twenty-four musicians, though rarely is the full compliment ever present for a performance (or practice). New musicians (now few) also receive consecrated canes of office from the priest, which are kept in a stand in the choir loft.

The Sacristanes ("Sacristans"), led by a sacristán mayor ("head sacristan"), is a group composed of seventeen men who assist the priest with ritual, ring the bells, and

care for the church. About fifty women are Abadesas ("abbesses"), a group further divided into those of the Virgen de Carmen and those of Santo Cristo. The entire group as well as each subgroup has a head. These women are charged with sweeping the sanctuary, decorating it for fiestas and regularly adorning the altars with flowers, and caring for the clothes of temple saints. The two groups by turns prepare food and chicha to be served to the Cabildo and other major groups at fiestas.

There are twenty or so Doctrineros ("Doctrinal Specialist"), sometimes called Rezadores ("Prayers"), who recite the appropriate prayers at wakes, burials, weddings, saints' days, and fiestas. These men are semi-literate and usually read the prayers from old prayer books, or from manual transcriptions of prayers from such books. And lastly, there is a small group of highly distinguished men, all ex-caciques, called Santos Varones ("Holy Males"). Virtually the sole function of these men is to remove the expired Christ from the cross, which they do in the church sanctuary with great solicitude and solemnity at the close of Mass on Holy Friday.

The Macheteros ("Machete Wielders") are by far the most important of the music-and-dance groups. The group consists of thirty-four men, including flautists, drummers, and dancers. The Macheteros lead all religious processions, escort family saints to and from the temple, and perform on

the portico at the main entrance of the temple during religious rituals throughout the year, including Mass on Sunday morning. The Macheteros are escorts and guards par excellence, roles that are so clearly manifest not only by the group's spatial position in processions and rituals but by the agonistic posturing and movements of the dancers as well. With their colorful feather diadems, white togas (camijetas), and stylized wooden machetes, the Macheteros have come to be an important symbol of the entire community. They are the supreme embodiment of what is termed folklore in Bolivia and are thus often invited by the Subprefecture of Alcadía to perform on special occasions such as the visit of a dignitary to the community.

All of the above groups, Cabildo through Macheteros, are held by the Indians to "belong" to the church. Accordingly, all incoming members of the groups receive consejos ("counsel") from top officials of both the Cabildo and their respective groups. In addition, all new members receive the blessing of the priest, who also administers the juramento, or "oath of office." Not "belonging" to the church, however, are more than twenty costumed groups, though not all perform as groups, that supply music and dance to major festal functions, or that wander through the crowds engaging in burlesque and general buffoonery.<sup>3</sup> Older Ignacianos claim that there were many more such groups fifty years ago, and that the current groups were in those times much larger and their costumes more splendid.

At the apex of the traditional politico-religious structure stands the priest, who is in a formal sense its head and whose structural position alone assures him of considerable authority and influence. Since all public fiestas are accompanied by at least one Mass, and all individual life-crisis rites require priestly intervention, the sacerdotal role is critical to the proper functioning of the native society. Because Indians play virtually all of the ancillary and supporting parts in the local church, interaction between the priest and the cacique, musicians, sacristans, and abbesses is necessarily frequent. Twice when the writer returned to San Ignacio after brief absences he was greeted by Ignacianos who proceeded to comment in a bewildered tone on the absence of the priest, who was out of town on both occasions. To be without a priest is a matter of no small concern to Ignacianos, who often reference events of the past to the resident priest of the time. It is to the priest that Ignacianos are apt to turn for assistance in solving a wide range of problems, from the posting of rural school teachers to the diagnosis and treatment of body ailments.

Whereas much of the influence of the priest derives from his authoritative position in the native structure, that of the corregidor ("magistrate"), by contrast, does not, for he is a part of no such structure. Although in recent times a member of the Indian sector of the community,

the corregidor is appointed by the departmental prefect upon the recommendation of the local subprefect, who actually makes the selection. The corregidor is a liaison between the White and Indian sectors, one who is ideally bilingual and who can shuttle between the two cultures and operate effectively in both. While in attendance at all meetings of the Cabildo, where he assumes a special seat that is in rank order above that of the cacique, the corregidor is not properly of the Cabildo, even though he is often formally billed as head of it. The influence of the corregidor, rather, depends on his ability to persuade, which in turn rests largely on his rapport with the native community. When a serious dispute broke out between the corregidor and the cacique during the writer's residence in the community, and each had his faction of followers, one traditional Ignaciano and long-time active member of the Cabildo remarked to the writer: "The corregidor is not part of the Cabildo, he represents the Whites." Traditional structural power and influence, then, favor the cacique, not the corregidor, who is viewed as the occupant of a White office. A diplomatic corregidor with good standing in the native community, however, can wield considerable power and influence.

With the native dispersion of recent years, structural elements of both sectors of the town have moved to the surrounding countryside. It has already been noted that fifteen of the twenty-seven settlements with Ignacianos have



corregidores de campo ("rural magistrates"). As in the town, these individuals are Indian and are selected by the local subprefect to represent the State in their respective settlements. Cabildos are found in at least seven of the fifteen settlements with corregidores, and a few of the settlements possess virtually the entire politico-religious structure, though with a greatly reduced compliment of personnel. But even native settlements without accredited corregidores often possess elements of the traditional structure, such as a small cabildo and a couple of musicians or doctrinal specialists. The larger settlements are usually visited by the priest of San Ignacio on the occasion of the fiesta of the settlement's patron saint, at which time a Mass is celebrated. Public rituals are otherwise led by local doctrinal specialists or musicians, who call the faithful together nightly in a small chapel for prayers and chants. Such individuals thus often function as ersatz priests in the remoter areas.

The structural forms of the Ignaciano community are validated through a series of public rituals. These rituals, which commemorate the saints or enact the mysteries of the life of Christ, are still conducted with great panache and splendor, though the old people claim that they are in decline. Foremost of such rituals is the fiesta of the patron saint, San Ignacio (i.e., Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus), on July 31. From July 30 through August 2, the town is alive with Masses, colorful processions,

music, drinking, eating, dancing, and commerce. All but a couple of the numerous costumed groups emerge at this season and file through the dusty streets of the town on the afternoon of the last day. A festive attraction is the bullfights held on three successive afternoons, a spectacle the suspense and humor of which are heightened by the competitive efforts of young men to shin up a greased pole in the middle of the ring in order to claim prizes donated by local merchants and hung from the summit.

In some sense more dramatic are the seasons of Christmas and Holy Week, when Ignacianos enact with great solemnity and attention to Biblical detail the mysteries of the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ. Many groups and individuals of the native community assemble and interact in highly prescribed and time-worn ways in the presentation of these dramas, and much food and chicha are consumed.

In addition to lesser celebrations to pay homage to sundry saints and virgens, such as Carmen, patroness of Bolivia, Mass on Sunday morning is by tradition a community rite of much importance. Local abbesses and doctrinal specialists gather in the sanctuary for antiphonal prayer chants prior to the beginning of Mass, a period sometimes referred to by local Whites as the misa de los taitas ("Indian Mass"). At the same time, members of the Cabildo gather in the Belén, the Indian ceremonial center, where they mingle casually during the Indian Mass. Presently they

remove their black canes of office from a rack to the side of the Belén altar, after which they form two opposing lines perpendicular to the altar. Upon hearing the final toll of a single bell, signal for Mass to begin, the two lines of men in tandem, led by the corregidor, file out of the Belén, through the street, and into the church. Both Cabildo members and abbesses sit in special areas near to and facing the main altar at the front of the sanctuary.

Chicha is an indispensable drink at all public and most private rites, and large quantities of it are prepared and consumed at major fiestas. Made usually of corn, though plantains, sweet potatoes, or manioc can also be used, the drink is dipped from large, round ceramic vessels with a gourd ladle and poured into half-sections of tutuma gourds to be served. The contribution of chicha to any event is taken as a mark of the cariño ("affectionate esteem") of the contributor towards the receiver, the latter being either another individual or a saint. The contributor is further obliged to select a ladler, a position to which attaches much honor. To refuse an offer of chicha is considered an insult, both to the server (who is usually the contributor or a family member) and to the person or saint for whom the chicha was prepared. To decline chicha is to reject a proffered cariño, and Ignacianos attach great value to expressions of cariño. The quantity of chicha present also influences the duration of the festal

event, for no fiesta can terminate until all the chicha has been consumed. In times prior to 1930, chicha was not only made in greater variety and consumed in larger quantities, but was also allowed to ferment to greater strengths. In those days it was principally through chicha that people--men and women--entered the inebriated state which facilitates the expression of cariño. Today, cane alcohol from Santa Cruz, the sale of which is a thriving business in San Ignacio, is purchased for inebriation and two drinking patterns coexist at most all ceremonial functions, one pattern for chicha and the other for trago, or cane alcohol.

#### Interaction and Conflict

The complex of community social forms in San Ignacio consists of a series of forms from modern Bolivia that have been superimposed upon a set of forms that derive in the main from the period of Jesuit occupation. The two sectors of the community must and do interact, and each must in some measure accommodate the other. Due to the overwhelmingly uneven distribution of wealth and power in favor of the White sector, however, the greater sacrifice in the matter of mutual accommodation must be made by Ignacianos. Conflict between the two sectors is inevitable, and Ignacianos must bear the brunt of all consequent stresses and strains.

Taking the point of view that San Ignacio is really composed of two communities, it can be said broadly that the Ignaciano community is a sacred one while the Hispanic

community is secular. Ignaciano culture turns around the local church. The White offices of subprefect and alcalde, for example, have little meaning to Ignacianos and are not part of their scheme of prestige ratings. The priest, the Cabildo and other religious offices, by contrast, are very meaningful to Ignacianos. The priest is especially important and may be asked by Ignacianos to intervene on their behalf in a variety of matters ranging from health to education. The cacique, or head of the Cabildo, commands much prestige among Ignacianos as does also the chapel master. The head sacristan, the heads of the two groups of abbesses, and the heads (called also caciques) of all other groups that "belong" to the church also command much prestige in native society. These were the individuals whose families intermarried and who controlled community wealth and power prior to the influx of Whites at the turn of the century.

The position of corregidor is the formal point of articulation of the two sectors. Although meeting with the Cabildo and sometimes spoken of as belonging to that institution, Ignacianos see the corregidor as a White office and thus not part of the Cabildo in the same sense as is the office of cacique. The corregidor is really an intermediary, or "culture broker." It is to the corregidor that the White power structure turns in order to mobilize Indian labor for the purpose of community maintenance and physical improvements. It was to the corregidor (and to the

cacique) that political party advocates turned in 1978 in order to win the Indian vote.

Conflict between the two sectors nowhere emerges more clearly than in the area of the administration of justice. There is currently much resentment of the local Mounted Police by Ignacianos, who claim that they have no respect for native customs and that they are abusive in their treatment of Indians. The Mounted Police commonly work on behalf of the White sector by forcing Ignacianos to cancel debts or pay fines with their labor. Indians are often harassed by carabineers for public drunkenness and what Whites would call idleness. The writer observed the local captain of the Mounted Police meet with Ignacianos in the Belén and there fault and threaten them in the strongest terms for their general debauchery and unwillingness to work, noting that such behavior was not conducive to the progress and prosperity of the community.

Ignacianos, then, are reluctant to carry complaints to the Mounted Police, but turn instead to the Cabildo, which has by tradition exercised a police function. Today, Indian crimes such as mayhem and murder (rare) fall within the jurisdiction of the Mounted Police, while less serious infractions are handled by the Cabildo. The latter commonly include accusations of witchcraft, petty theft, and domestic quarrels sometimes resulting in physical abuse. But some Ignacianos, fully aware of the fear incited by the Mounted

Police, will denounce other Ignacianos before them as a way of taking greater vengeance. Whereas punishments by the Mounted Police include incarceration and the assessment of fines, those of the Cabildo include stern rebukes and flogging.

The two sectors conflict in many other ways, as the following chapters will try to show. The system of land tenure within the area controlled by the municipality (i.e., the Alcaldía), for example, does not derive from the native sector and is entirely alien to Ignacianos, only a few of whom can even vaguely relate to the notions of written land titles and taxes.

The cultural duality portrayed only superficially here is a theme that emerges at every turn in the chapters to follow. It forms a backdrop against which the dynamic of economic change over the past half-century is played out and is thus a factor crucial to the understanding of that dynamic.

Notes to Chapter IV

<sup>1</sup>This term seem to be of Tupí origin, though the suffix denoting plural is obviously Ignaciano. According to Max Boudin (1966: 96-97), the root karai in the Tenetehara Tupí dialect of the upper River Gurupí in Brazil has among its referents: astuto ("astute"); mañoso ("cunning"); Branco ("White," in the ethnic sense); and estrangeiro ("foreigner"). The term was in use among Ignacianos as far back as the oldest person can remember, and is in use today also among Trinitarios and other groups of the pampas.

<sup>2</sup>Many terms of the Spanish dialect of the region, especially those relating to flora and fauna, are native, often Tupí. Such terms seem to have entered the area with Cruzeños, who had much contact with Tupí speakers during colonial times. A very useful dictionary of regional terms and expressions is provided by Sanabria (1975).

<sup>3</sup>For a description of folklore among the Ignacianos, the interested reader is referred to a short descriptive treatise by Ms. Rebecca Ott (1971) of the Summer Institute of Linguistics. For an expanded treatment of folklore in the Beni, see the work by Rogers Becerra Casanovas (1977).



CHAPTER V  
HORTICULTURE AND RANCHING: CONTRASTING SYSTEMS  
OF LAND USE AND ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

Horticulture and cattle ranching, two contrasting forms of human economic activity and land use, coexist in the area of San Ignacio. Subsistence oriented and pursued by Indians, horticulture is practiced on the forested high ground. Ranching, by contrast, is a White occupation, is commercially oriented to provide highland markets with beef, and is centered on the natural grasslands of the plains, though not restricted to them.

Horticulture: An Indian Occupation

The major food crops of the Ignaciano garden, or isániti (chaco in local Spanish), are arroz ("rice"), plátano ("plantains"), yuca ("sweet manioc"), and maíz ("corn"). These crops, foremost of which is rice, which is consumed in large quantities with every meal, comprise the bulk of the vegetable diet. Lesser cultigens include sandía ("watermelon"), zapallo and joco (varieties of squash), gualusa ("taro"), and caña ("sugar cane"). Maní ("peanuts") is rarely found, with camote ("sweet potato") and frijol ("beans") only slightly more common. Widely cultivated also is the guineo, an especially hardy variety of banana that, in contrast with

the plantain, competes well with the ever-encroaching forest and continuously shoots forth suckers which grow quickly to produce racemes of ripe fruit. Papaya trees are commonly found in the garden as well as about the house site. Non-food plants of the garden include algodón ("cotton"), which is usually planted (if at all) at the margins, and sometimes a small patch of tabáco ("tobacco").

Numerous plantings are typically found on the house site. Among the trees often there are the tutumo (for gourds and medicine), the tamarind, orange, lemon, lime, grapefruit, and avocado. Medicinal plants in numerous varieties are also common, including paja cedrón, hierba buena, and piñon. And always near the cook shed are urucú (for coloring food) and ají ("pepper") in several varieties. Tobacco plantings are also common around the house. Coffee and cacao, which takes about five years to mature and bear fruit, are now rarely planted by Ignacianos, though some individuals still harvest haphazardly from ancient groves received as inheritance near the town.

Horticultural practices of the slash-and-burn cycle vary considerably from one chacarero ("gardener") to another. Only one of numerous dilemmas facing the gardener involves the yearly decision of when to clear the forest. To clear in June or July, when the sun and wind dry the felled debris thoroughly, means that the critical burn in August or early September is likely to be a good one. Once burned, however,

the chaco must be planted within about twenty days, or else weeds and sometimes grasses emerge and a prior weeding will be necessary. But the plants may be in the ground too soon to catch sufficient moisture from the first rains, the onset and intensity of which can vary greatly over the period mid-September to mid-November.<sup>1</sup> While this problem is less critical for manioc, plantains, and corn, though yields of these crops, especially corn, are usually somewhat lower when planting is too far in advance of the first rains, it is definitely critical for rice, the seeds of which die in the ground within about a month of planting if no precipitation is forthcoming. To wait until October to clear, on the other hand, is to risk insufficient drying time, a poor burn, and consequently poor yields. Indeed, beyond a certain point, the gardener is forced to clear in barbecho, or low growth, since high-growth debris would not dry. And that, of course, means not only lower yields, but also a greater problem with weeds and grasses during the growing season.

Although most peasants agree that the ideal time to clear is during June or July in order to get the good burn, and certainly many do clear at this time, probably as many wait until late September or October, and a few until early November. Since it is mainly rice that poses the dilemma, some peasants clear at both times: in late June or July in order to plant manioc, plantains, corn, and perhaps some rice in August; and then again in September or October in order

to plant the major rice crop. It is certain also that many of those who do not clear until late September or October were unable to do so earlier since the dry season is virtually the only time of the year that opportunities are available to work for local Whites and thus secure the wherewithal to obtain necessities. The writer's observations as well as numerous comments by gardeners and informants suggest that this compelling need to work for cash is a major obstacle to an ecologically more rational swidden cycle.

Clearing for a garden first involves slashing the low growth, which may be thick in barbecho, or second-growth forest. The slash is allowed to dry for at least four days before the taller growth is felled and trimmed with an axe. If clearing takes place in June or July, the debris is left to be dried by the sun and wind for a month in order that the burn be good.

Optimal conditions for a good burn include a strong sun, a slight wind to drive the flames, and rain clouds lingering on the horizon. Many leaves are also deemed necessary to fuel the fire. It is considered ideal when the rains quench the last embers from the burn, thus settling the ash. The lejía ("lye") from the ash, sometimes referred to as "water of the ash," is held to "burn" the crops if the ash is not first settled by rain. If the burn is less than complete, one must basurear, or gather the remaining debris into piles

about the site and reburn. Once burned, the site must be planted within about twenty days, or else weeds and grasses begin to enter.

If clearings are made late, however, in October or November, compromises are called for. Only barbecho can be cleared since there is neither time to fell in monte alto ("high forest") nor time for the debris of such forest to dry. Gardeners who fell late will often try to hasten the drying process by further cutting debris into finer pieces. To state once more, barbechos are beset by weeds and grasses as well as by the problem of lower yields.

Intercropping among Ignacianos is minimal, so that gardens tend to have about them a certain orderly appearance. This is in sharp contrast to Chimán gardens, for example, where a riotous display of crops meets the eye. Ignacianos say that Trinitarios also intercrop much more than do they. Rice and corn are intercropped to a degree when both are put on high terrain between September and November, though the corn is sparsely sown in order not to shade the dense rice plantings. Such intercropped areas, however, are thought of as rice plots. If rice is put in a low area, though, a common practice, then it must be planted alone since the rising ground water would kill the corn. In addition to what little corn may be intercropped with rice, corn is always put in a plot apart at the beginning of the rainy season. The following May, then, after the rains have ceased and when the waters everywhere

are receding, corn is planted again, usually in the same plot where rice was harvested a short time before. Virtually all Ignacianos, thus, take at least two corn harvests per year and some take three, planting corn yet again on high terrain (low terrain is often the first to dry out) during the winter dry season. May is also the ideal month for planting sugar cane, either intercropped with corn or put alone, though only those few Ignacianos who grow and mill cane on any scale do this. It is more often the case that a small patch of cane is planted with other crops at the beginning of the rainy season in order to have sweetener for drinks and sweet stalks for the children to suck in season.

Manioc is planted just before the onset of the rains, usually alone, though sometimes a few plants are intercropped with corn. Manioc cuttings are continuously planted during the dry months, and only then, so that it might always be available. Manioc must be put on high terrain, preferably on the slopes of lomitás, or low but abrupt rises in the land. Even when planted on high, level terrain, a few days of heavy rain can raise the water table and rot the tubers. It is quite often that tubers on such flat terrain must be exhumed after much rain and made into chivé, or fermented manioc flour, in order that they not be lost.

Plantains are a phase-out crop, as is to some extent manioc, and are planted at the beginning of the rainy season,

often intercropped with corn and/or rice, in an area that is being returned to barbecho, or fallow. Like manioc, plantains must be set on high terrain and must be kept very clean for the time that fruit is taken from the plant--from two to three years, depending on altitude and the growth status of the forest in which the initial clearing was made. The guineo is also a phase-out crop but does not require the attentions of the plantain. The guineo has both a higher rate of fruiting and a longer fruiting life than the plantain.

Rice is harvested between November and February, depending on when planted. The usual variety requires four and a half months to mature, but there is a three-month variety that is commonly sown as a stopgap measure in order to have rice before the main harvest. Sometimes a second harvest, known as the soca, is taken from a single planting two and a half to three months later. Corn requires four months to mature, though choclos ("young ears") are often harvested at three months. Maturation time for manioc is from six to nine months, depending on the variety; at least one variety can remain in the ground for two years without rotting. Ignacianos will typically single out manioc and comment on its yield relative to that of other crops; the standard of comparison is not explicit, but probably involves some intuitive ratio of availability to a mix of factors such as labor input and surface area planted. Cacao trees, for those

Ignacianos who have them, typically begin to fruit in January and are harvested through February. Coffee trees begin to fruit in February and continue through March.

The key factors on which gardeners focus when selecting a garden site are stage of forest succession, as gauged by tree girth and height, and altitude of terrain. Primary forest growth is always deemed superior to second growth, other things being equal. Clearing in primary forest means a better burn, a delayed weed and grass problem, and higher yields over a longer period. The yields of rice, and to a less extent of cane, however, may be less sensitive to forest type than those of plantain and corn, which are always more productive when planted in high-growth clearings. Indeed, the writer was told by a couple of informants that there was no difference in yield between rice sown in high growth and that sown in barbecho. It is quite often the case, though, that other things are not equal. As has been seen, a delayed schedule can force a gardener to either clear in barbecho or not clear at all; but frequently other reasons--e.g., a child in school, occupancy of a politico-religious office, a medical problem, desire to be near a marketing center--supervene to induce a gardener to accept the consequences and remain in an area where only barbecho is available.

The role of terrain relief in both site selection and subsequent cropping practices is critical. Altitude not



only varies from forest to pampa, but also varies greatly within forested zones. The lowest forested terrain, of considerable extension in some areas, becomes swamp forest with the advent of the yearly rains and thus totally useless for planting. But even otherwise high terrain is usually liberally marked with depressions of greater or lesser size which further reduce the planting area. The terrain altitude over virtually any site selected, therefore, will necessarily have some variation. The problem of the gardener, therefore, becomes one of matching altitude to crops and seasons. And this Ignacianos do with great skill.

Rice not only produces at a lower altitude than any of the other cultigens, but yields more there than at the higher altitudes. This, coupled with its reputed relative insensitivity to forest type, would make rice the least demanding cultigen of the crop spectrum from an environmental point of view and may in part explain why it is so widely cultivated. When put in a low area, however, water must not accumulate there before the seeds germinate, or they rot; also, the tips of the young rice stalks must at all times remain well above the water, which accumulates increasingly in the lower areas as the rains progress. Manioc and plantains, of course, require the highest terrain of all, while cane fares best at the middle altitudes. If planted either at the beginning of the rainy season or at the peak of the dry season, corn

must be put on high terrain, but can be put on lower terrain if planted about May (which it is) while there is still sufficient water in the earth to support growth. And so it goes.

It is, then, the knowledge of how to vary the natural factors of forest type, crop type, altitude of terrain, and season that is critical to successful adaptation to the local environment. The factors of both elevation and forest type vary over the territory now occupied by Ignacianos. Near San Ignacio, the forest is nearly all barbecho, save those patches where the coffee and cacao groves are found. To the east of the town and north of the highway, beyond roughly a five-kilometer radius of the town, there is still considerable high-growth forest into which Ignacianos settled there are continuously cutting. Moving southwesterly and up the River Apére, on the other hand, primary forest becomes ever more abundant as does also terrain of higher altitude and with fewer depressions. Some informants noted that plantains, the yields of which seem to be a measure of the soil quality of "tiredness" in the minds of Ignacianos, are more productive there than in the areas near to San Ignacio. It was in the context of eliciting horticultural comparisons between upriver areas and those closer to the town that soils were mentioned by two informants. Soil per se, though, is never a determinant of site selection. The comments described the

soils of the forest near San Ignacio as consisting of greda dura ("hard clay"), while the upriver soils were described as tierra arenosa ("sandy earth") and were generally deemed better for making gardens.

Typically, each nuclear household clears between seven and ten tareas (1 tarea = 10m. x 100m. = .10 hectares) of forest each year. As already noted, there is no high forest in the immediate area of San Ignacio and all gardens there must be made in different stages of barbecho. Accordingly, the lands there are used more intensively than those of the upriver areas, where high forest is always available. Since the shifts of an individual gardener rarely rotate in any kind of regular fashion, it is hard to talk in terms of any crop-fallow ratio. However, many gardeners near the town commonly clear in forest that has lain fallow for no more than five years, and as many as four rive harvests are taken from some plots before they are left to fallow. The cropping period for any particular garden is a function of the forest stage in which the garden was cleared as well as the capacity of the gardener to fight invading grasses and accept declining yields. In the upriver areas, by contrast, two rice harvests are commonly taken from a single garden, sometimes three. One Ignaciano, who lives well to the south of San Ignacio in an area of extensive pampa and little forest, is forced to make gardens on forested islas. Lacking an abundance of forest, his pattern is to take two rice harvests from a cleared area

before turning it to fallow for three years, then returning. But the area is good for only two such cycles, for then the grasses become unmanageable. This man has thus turned one entire isla into pampa, but argues that the forest will eventually return.

Gardens are abandoned primarily because of the invasion of weeds (hierba) and grasses (pastos, or paja), and secondarily because of declining yields when the earth "tires" (cansarse). The weeds are controllable, but the grasses, of kinds found on the pampas, eventually take relentless hold. Grasses often do not appear in a garden cleared in high forest for one year, and do not force abandonment until after at least three rice harvests. In barbecho, on the other hand, grasses often appear within a few days of burning, especially if the pampas are nearby. Rice planted in barbecho may require two weedings before the first harvest, whereas that planted in high forest may or may not require a single light weeding. The task of weeding, of course, becomes progressively more laborious as the garden continues in use.

The grasses most dreaded by gardeners are sujo (Imperata brasiliensis) and pasto amargo (Panicum fasciculatum). The latter, which is thick on the pampas, must be removed immediately it enters, or else it grows quickly, flowers, and releases numerous seeds and begins to spread geometrically over the site. The grass is by then beyond control.

In order to arrive at some minimal figure of areal extension necessary to practice the swidden mode of cultivation in the proximity of the town, two Ignacianos who have made gardens there for many years were asked to speculate on the minimal area that they would need in order to feed their current households under the shifting mode. It was further hoped that they would reason aloud in arriving at a figure. Under the pseudonyms Pedro and Pablo, their respective responses are now described.

Pedro, whose property lies within the radio suburbano ("suburban radius") of the town, holds title issued by the Alcaldía of San Ignacio to only eight hectares of the land where he currently makes his gardens and has his tree crops --cacao, coffee, avocado, and citrus. Pedro thinks that he could feed his current household of ten people with a minimum of twenty hectares of land and reasons as follows: On ten of the twenty hectares he would plant tree crops, especially coffee and cacao, since there is money to be made from them. Of the remaining ten, he estimates that from two to three hectares inevitably would consist of curiches, bajuras, and other depressions, and thus be unavailable for cultivation. From seven to eight hectares, then, would be available for making gardens. However, he adds, his ideal (assuming circumscription) would be to have fifty hectares of land, for then he would have land also for his sons and their families should they one day decide to work with him.

Pablo, who currently works within roughly a fifteen-hectare area, has no land titles and is surrounded on all sides by other Ignaciano gardeners. Pablo settled in this area in the early 1950's and recalls that then there was only one other gardener nearby. There was still monte alto, or high forest, and one could shift about freely. But others gradually drifted into the area, so that by 1968 Pablo's area for shifting had been reduced to about twenty hectares. He estimates with some reservations that he could maintain his current household of seven people on a minimum of twenty hectares, but quickly adds that virtually the entire area would have to be cultivable. He too would prefer guaranteed access to fifty hectares (assuming circumscription) so that land would be available to his sons should they one day wish to make gardens in the area.

Few peasants make any effort to seriously quantify yields, probably because participation in local markets is so marginal. However, the same two individuals above, Pedro and Pablo, both considered by other Ignacianos to be hombres valientes ("hard workers"), often monitor their yields closely. Pablo says that one tarea of rice will yield from fourteen to twenty arrobas of grain (with husk), depending on a host of factors that can intervene between sowing and harvesting. Pedro, on the other hand, claims that one tarea of rice will yield from fifteen to twenty arrobas of grain (with husk). And yet another gardener puts the yield at between eight and fifteen

arrobas to the tarea. Yields vary also, it should be said, with the particular variety of rice planted.

According to Pablo, one tarea of corn will yield between 400 and 600 ears, or from fifty to sixty arrobas of grain. Pedro, who claims to have experimented, says that he harvested 900 ears, or 30 arrobas of grain, from one tarea of corn. As with rice, however, yields vary with the variety of corn planted.

The agricultural labor unit among Ignacianos is the nuclear family. Men do the heavier work of clearing and weeding, while women and children usually help to sow rice, corn, and cane. Labor requirements are heaviest at the time of the rice harvest, when the grains must be gathered almost immediately after they mature. At such times a neighbor or relative may lend a hand and is often paid in kind, never in cash. Such help is just as often, however, returned in labor, an arrangement known as mano a mano. The few families who grow and mill cane on any scale will also call for help beyond the nuclear family for the cutting and milling season, a time of heavy labor demand. Again, remuneration is usually in kind.

#### Ranching: A White Occupation

With very few exceptions, the numerous ranches of the area belong to Whites. Since commercial ranching is largely

a post-1950 phenomenon, the section will open with some historical notes on the past thirty years.

One of the first projects designed to facilitate the commercialization of Beni cattle, the Reyes Project, was a direct outgrowth of the Bohen Plan, a scheme formulated for the development of the different regions of the country by a United States economic mission to Bolivia in the early 1940's (Clyburn 1970: 1-14). Proposed for the Beni was a meat processing plant which could handle 12,000 cattle a year. The project, which began in 1944, was undertaken by the Corporación Boliviana de Fomento (CBF), a Bolivian agency charged with national development and also created at the suggestion of the Plan. Reyes, the scene of the project, was a small town on the River Beni at the western edge of the Beni pampas. Great physical alterations were made to the town, an electrical generator and sawmill were installed, an abattoir was built, an airstrip was constructed, and 5,060 acres of land were secured for the project (Clyburn 1970: 13). It was thus that the Beni airlift of beef began in Reyes about 1946, when carcasses were flown to La Paz in B-17's and C-47's, cheap surplus United States airplanes available at the close of the Second World War. The slaughtering operation in Reyes was airlifting several million kilograms of beef a year by 1952 (Denevan 1963: 43).

After 1950, with a continuing steep climb in beef prices in the highland cities, Beni cattle were quickly rounded up



and slaughtered at airstrips that were being built about the department. The frenzy to round up and drive cattle to an airstrip slaughtering facility was already underway in the area of San Ignacio when such a facility was installed at the AASANA airport there in about 1954. Cattle were rounded up for slaughter without regard to age, sex, or quality as ranchers scurried to make quick money. Many saw it as a chance for quick wealth and subsequent departure from the Beni; town officials in Loreto reported that fifteen ranches there were abandoned in the 1950's (Denevan 1963: 43). Predictably, the decade was plagued with cattle rustling, though it was not always clear just what qualified as such because of the numerous feral and semi-feral cattle still roaming the pampas. According to local bush pilots, however, who aided in the spotting of feral cattle, few remained by 1962 (Denevan 1963: 41). William Denevan, who was in the region at the time, reported in 1963 what seemed to him an incipient recovery of the dangerously depleted herds and perhaps the dawn of an era of true ranching (Denevan 1963: 44).

The initial years of commercialization, then, say until 1963, witnessed a decline in the population of some of the smaller towns as ranchers and workers either left the region or moved to larger towns like Trinidad, which increased in size and prosperity (Denevan 1963: 43). The decline of the cattle population over the same period was steep, though

just how steep is hard to gauge for want of totally reliable estimates and head counts. Frigorífico los Andes ("The Andes Packing Company"), in a census conducted in 1948, reported 681,266 head distributed over 567 ranches of the Beni (Vivado 1966: 8). Again, feral cattle are not reported. A census in 1950 attributes 706,837 head to the department, with 220,018 head in Yacuma Province, 119,373 head in Cercado, and 100,184 head in Moxos (Vivado 1966: 8). Denevan, however, cites a cattle population figure of over 1,000,000 for the department in 1952 (Denevan 1963: 43). A figure reported in December of 1959, by contrast, puts the cattle population of the department at 486,000, but this figure follows in the wake of severe floods in that year, during which an estimated 63,100 head died either through starvation or drowning (Vivado 1966: 9). Denevan gives a population figure of 350,000 for 1962 (Denevan 1963: 43). Ignoring problems of both reliability and comparability, such figures suggest a decline in the cattle population of between 25 and 65 percent over the first ten to fifteen years following the beginning of the airlift.

Manuel Vivado, who collected, generated, evaluated, and synthesized a voluminous quantity of data on cattle ranching and beef production in the lowland regions during the mid-1960's under a contract with United States Agency for International Development, puts the total number of cattle in the

Beni at 517,690 head, 452,690 of which are distributed over 721 ranches of 100 head or more, while 65,000 (estimated) are found on ranches of less than 100 head (Vivado 1966: Appendix 2: Table 16). Very approximate by Vivado's own admission (1966: 12), the numbers were arrived at through interviews with ranchers and others from the different provinces and towns of the region. From such interviews lists of ranch properties by owner and number of head were prepared for each province. The method yielded 74,795 head of cattle for Moxos Province, 66,795 of which are found on 109 ranches of 100 head or more, while 8,000 (estimated) are reported for ranches of less than 100 head (Vivado 1966: Appendix 2: Table 16). Using the published lists (Vivado 1966: Appendix 1: 19-21) for ranches with 100 head or more, the total number of cattle on such ranches distributes over ranch size (by head number) as follows: ranches of from 100 to 399 head: 13,265 (64 ranches); 400-999: 14,230 (26); 1,000-1,999: 15,800 (12); 2,000-4,999: 12,500 (5); 5,000 or greater: 11,000 (2).<sup>2</sup> Again ignoring problems of comparability and reliability, the total cattle population of the province suggested by Vivado for ca. 1965 represents a 25 percent decrease from the 1950 census figure above of 100,184 head for the province.

The airlift and commercialization of beef cattle have not only profoundly altered person-to-person and person-to-resource relations in the Beni, but have also changed the

relation of the region to the highlands. Thirty-five private slaughterhouse-airstrip complexes were constructed between 1948, with the initiation of meat flights from Reyes, and 1965 (Vivado 1966: ii). In 1960, 5,200 of the 7,500 tons of beef marketed in La Paz were flown from the Beni pampas (Denevan 1963: 43). And by 1970 the Beni was supplying 70 percent of all beef consumed in La Paz and half of that consumed in the country (Clyburn 1970: 13-14, 19). National beef production had thus attained a small surplus by 1970, a situation contrasting sharply with that of pre-airlift times, when the country imported about 40 percent of its beef consumption (Clyburn 1970: 13-14). According to the Vivado report of 1966, "The available information on imports of beef cattle and meat for both Perú and Chile, together with the prices that are paid for them, indicate a convenient and considerable potential market. It is considered that the countries mentioned will not be able to produce enough internally to satisfy demand and that the market will be available for years" (Vivado 1966: iv). Except for the lucrative sale of contraband cattle on the hoof to Brazil during the first half of the decade of the 1970's, there has been no appreciable export of beef from the region. Ranchers in the Beni today, nonetheless, talk eagerly of a relaxing of government controls so that they can enter what they feel to be a lucrative export market in neighboring countries, including Peru and Chile.

The value of both land and cattle has increased dramatically over the years. Before the Chaco War, in about 1930, in the area of San Ignacio one could buy one hectare of good grazing land for one boliviano (about \$0.40 U.S.). Such a hectare of land could be had for about 100 bolivianos (about \$0.52 U.S. at official rate, \$0.15 U.S. at free-market rate) in 1953. In the area today (1978), almost any property of 300 hectares would cost at least 150,000 pesos,<sup>3</sup> a price of 500 pesos (about \$25.00 U.S.) per hectare. During the writer's presence in the community, one ranch property of 2,500 hectares (forest and pampa) sold for 1,600,000 pesos (= 640 pesos, or about \$32.00 U.S., per hectare) and another of 10,000 hectares (forest and pampa), located near the River Cabito to the southwest of San Ignacio, sold for 7,000,000 pesos (= 700 pesos, or about \$35.00 U.S., per hectare). And a ranch of 300 hectares (forest and pampa) and 400 head of cattle on the highway to Trinidad sold at about the same time for 1,600,000 pesos (about \$80,000.00 U.S.).

The rise in local prices of cattle and beef, now beyond the means of Ignacianos, has been equally dramatic. A fat steer in 1930 could be had for about 15.00 bolivianos (about \$6.00 U.S.) and a kilogram of fresh beef for about 0.22 bolivianos (about \$0.09 U.S.)--or, to the Indian, for just over one-half tutuma (see Note 28, Chapter 3) of cacao beans. A kilogram of hulled rice in San Ignacio at this time cost

about the same as a kilogram of fresh beef, or 0.22 bolivianos. In 1953 a fat steer typically sold for about 6,000.00 bolivianos (about \$31.00 U.S. at official rate, \$9.00 U.S. at free-market rate) and an arroba of hulled rice for 500.00 bolivianos, a per-kilogram price of about 44.00 bolivianos (about \$0.23 U.S. at official rate, \$0.06 U.S. at free-market rate). By 1978, when the writer was in San Ignacio, a fat steer typically sold for 3,000.00 pesos (about \$150.00 U.S.), while the price of a kilogram of fresh beef (with bones) in the town rose from 15.00 to 18.00 pesos (about \$0.90 U.S.) during that year as the result of a decision in August by the Beni Federation of Ranchers to raise the kilogram (carcass weight) price received by the rancher. A kilogram of hulled rice at the time sold in the pulperías ("grocery stores") of the town for 10.00 pesos (about \$0.50 U.S.). According to a communication received by the writer from the town in January of 1980, however, a time of national political and economic turmoil, a kilogram of fresh beef had climbed to 28.00 pesos and a kilogram of hulled rice to 18.00 pesos. To summarize in terms of relative changing market values of basic food items in San Ignacio, then, a fat steer was worth 68 kilograms of hulled rice in 1930, 136 kilograms in 1953, and 300 kilograms in 1978. Likewise, a kilogram of fresh beef in 1930 was worth a kilogram of hulled rice, whereas a kilogram of beef was worth 1.8 kilograms of rice in 1978.<sup>4</sup>

Most ranches of the San Ignacio area are small; a modal size of about 300 head of cattle is probable. It is estimated by reliable sources that no more than ten ranchers have above 10,000 head. Whereas the small ranchers have only one ranch, or puesto, the large ones typically own several: one rancher has his 10,000 head distributed over eight puestos. The largest rancher in the province, reported to own about 20,000 head, has 2,000 head on a single puesto, but this is rare.

The ratio of cattle to land area varies greatly in the region. Using actual cases known to the writer, one rancher has 100 head on 400 hectares, 10 of which are forest, while another rancher has 300 head on 600 hectares (including forest) and yet a third runs 400 head on 800 hectares (including forest). One informed observer says that a ranch with from 800 to 1,000 head will typically have an areal extension of between 2,000 and 2,500 hectares of land, including both pampa and forest. Many if not most of the ranchers in the area scoff at the figure of five hectares per head used by Agrarian Reform, and one long-time small rancher claims that no more than two hectares are needed per head. The greatest press of cattle upon the land, however, seems to be found on the smaller ranches, whose operations are often only marginally viable economically.

The supportive capacity of any given land area, however, ultimately rests on the critical ratio of high ground

to low ground in that area. And it is on this ratio that any prospective rancher or land buyer will first focus. Low terrain, with its water-filled depressions and rich forage grasses such as arrozillo and cañuela, is necessary for dry-season cattle maintenance, while high terrain, either pampa or forest, the former with such forage grasses as gramalote, is necessary for cattle refuge and feeding during flood season. Even during the dry months cattle prefer to sleep on higher terrain, especially when forested, for the added warmth there.

More than any other single natural factor, it is the seasonal flooding of the pampas that controls land use, limits herd size, and accounts for so many of the area's ranching practices. Both forage availability and foraging behavior of cattle are highly seasonal. Cattle can often feed on the richer grasses of the lower areas even during flood season since these grasses tend to gain in height with the rising waters to a point, so that the tips are above water level and the grasses thus available to the animals. As long as this condition obtains, cattle pass the day feeding in such flooded areas and return to elevated flood-free terrain--which must still be available--to sleep at night. If the flood waters completely cover the low-area grasses, however, as they usually eventually do, the grasses die and cattle are forced to rely solely on the vegetation of high terrain. Although such high-terrain pampa grasses as gramalote are



often available to a degree, it is usually the case that cattle must roam through forest--since high ground is most often forested--and feed on leaves of the motacú palm and low growth, which may or may not be available in adequate quantities, depending on the stage of forest succession.

Islas provide such refuge and forage but are inadequate if flooding is severe and prolonged. Such areas of forest refuge have often been picked clean of low growth by the close of the rainy season, and the forest floor reduced to a carpet of mud.

It is from inanition that cattle frequently die during flood season, though drowning is not uncommon. Cattle can forage in water to the knees, but tire quickly when water reaches the shoulders. Cattle often tire and drown, therefore, while searching for or trying to reach high-ground forage and refuge. Also, cattle hooves rot with prolonged submergence in water, thus further restricting movement, and after an extended time in high water the animals succumb when the sphincter muscles relax and water enters through the anus.

Cattle losses vary with the intensity and locus of flooding, both of which in turn vary greatly from one year to the next. Generally, however, risks of loss are greater in some areas than in others. Along the Mamoré, for example, where high ground may be from ten to twenty kilometers distant, a rapid and unforeseen rise in the river gives little

time to evacuate grazing cattle to the distant higher terrain and losses can be staggering. Along the smaller rivers such as the Apére, Sénero, and Tijamuchí, by contrast, where the waters tend not to rise so quickly and high ground is never very far, there is usually time for the cattle to either take refuge or be driven there.

Whereas high-ground vegetation cover can be all-sustaining during the flood months, it can be woefully inadequate at the height of the winter dry season, when local ranchers customarily fire the high pampa. Over the period from August to November, when low-ground grasses are gradually exhausted by cattle that concentrate there to forage and drink, the tall and browning high-pampa grasses, which cattle will not eat, are fired by sections to bring out new grass and thus sustain the herds until the summer rains once again bring forth grass in the lower areas. A prolonged and severe dry season may require two such firings. Certain days of September or October are hazy and the air acrid from the smoke of surrounding pampas afire. Visibility was so low from smoke on one day in 1978 that a meat plane was unable to land in late afternoon at the local airstrip. Green shoots push through the earth within five days of firing, and within a week to ten days cattle are able to feed on the tender green sprouts.

Ranching in the San Ignacio area, as in the Beni generally, is rustic and characterized by low capital inputs.

Except for the limited application of vaccines to combat disease and the introduction of foreign cattle strains to upgrade the local criollo ("creole") stock, ranching practices have changed little since Jesuit times. One local veterinarian estimates that no more than 30 percent of the ranchers vaccinate against diseases, but also notes that some zones are more disease-prone than others. Among other varieties, zebu brood bulls have been widely introduced to the area in recent years, so that much, if not most, of the cattle are now mestizo. Such cattle are much larger than the native criollo stock, an important factor for ranchers producing meat for the market, and are commonly held to be better swimmers and of generally superior endurance and thus better able to withstand the rigors of the environment.

Ranch houses, usually built on the edge of isla forest are often identical to the Indian houses already described, though some of them are of adobe and have screened windows. Corrals, snubbing posts, and chutes are all of local woods. Fenced potreros ("pasturing areas") are made in adjacent forest and planted in fodder grasses such as capín (Melinis minutiflora), pasto elefante ("elephant grass," Pennisetum purpureum), or yaraguá (Hypparrhenia rufa). Capín is widely sown and highly regarded in the area because of its good yield on low terrain. Potreros are used for pasturing horses, less often for sequestering calves on small ranches while

the mothers are readied for milking. Otherwise, all pastures in the area are natural ones. The practice of fencing range property is only incipient in the area, and disputes sometimes arise when cattle stray onto a neighbor's pastures. There may also be a garden near the house from which the workers derive such foodstuffs as corn and rice.

The labor requirements of local ranching are modest indeed. A mayordomo and one or two mozos, or vaqueros, typically care for between 400 and 500 head. One reliable informant says that the modal ranch of the area is worked by only two men. The number of personnel required to work cattle, however, ultimately depends on the tractability of the animals, and that in turn rests largely on the frequency with which they are droved and corralled. Cattle on the smaller ranches are usually corralled about every three days, at least in the dry season. Labor demands are greater during the winter dry season, when extra men are taken on for the tasks of branding, vaccinating, castrating, making potreros, and the building and mending of corrals, fences, and dwellings. Such labor is hired on either a time-worked basis--by the day (jornalero) or by the month (mensualero)--or a job (or contract) basis; the latter form prevails for extended tasks such as making potreros and erecting fences.

Ranchers, who complain constantly of the high cost and unreliability of local labor just as they do of a lack

of land, widely favor a cattle shares arrangement with carefully selected individuals as an economic way to promote the care and growth of herds. The partido arrangement, as it is called, basically involves entrusting a small capital herd to an individual, the partidario, who cares for the cattle for a specified period during which offspring are divided equally between the two parties. The terms of the partido agreement, usually carefully stipulated in writing, vary somewhat from one case to another. A capital herd, typically consisting of from 100 to 200 animals, 10 percent of which are bulls and the remainder cows of reproductive age (2 years or older), are given to the partidario for a term of normally five years. The male offspring are divided equally between the parties yearly, while the females are not so divided until the end of the fifth year. From this final accumulation of females, however, losses in the capital herd are replaced prior to the equal division, a practice that distributes losses equally between the parties.

In addition to the capital herd, the partidario, who usually owns no mounts, is supplied with a couple of horses for which he must later pay with his share of the offspring. It was the practice until recent times for the capital herd to consist of 20 rather than 10 percent bulls, and for the costs of medicines, vaccinations (if administered), and so on to be borne solely by the owner of the capital herd. Now,

however, the contract usually stipulates that such costs be shared equally by both parties. The contract may further stipulate that any losses in the capital herd be borne solely by the partidario, or may curtail the right of the latter to milk the cows. The partidario, who is most often landless, also receives the right to pasture the animals on lands of the owner of the capital herd for the duration of the agreement. The terms of the partido agreement are the same, however, for the case of the occasional partidario who chooses to pasture the received cattle on his own lands.

From the point of view of the rancher, the cost-benefit ratio of the partido arrangement is generally more favorable than the alternative of hiring men to tend and work the cattle. The arrangement does not, for example, require that the partidario be supplied with a salary, food ration, and social benefits such as medical care. And since most of the partidarios are peasants with neither the lands to pasture cattle nor the means to dispose of what perchance remains of their share of the cattle increase at the close of the term, such increase is most often sold on the spot at below-market prices to the rancher who provided the capital herd. The rancher, therefore, is purchasing cattle, the history of which he knows, on his own property at a low price. In one case known to the writer, an Indian partidario was selling steers to his patrón--and it is in this relation that the rancher stands to the Indian partidario--and supplier of the capital

herd for about 2,500 pesos, animals that would have fetched at least 3,000 pesos on the local market.

While the existence of the partido arrangement well antedates commercialization of cattle in the Beni, recent years have witnessed a proliferation of the form. Many if not most of the partidarios in the San Ignacio area are Ignacianos. There is much desire, especially among younger Ignacianos, to enter a partido arrangement with a local White rancher. This is so because the optimal gains to be derived over, say, five years from agriculture are far less than those to be realized, assuming suerte ("good fortune"), over the same period from cattle under a partido arrangement. From the point of view of the Indian partidario an arrangement holds the prospect of acquiring riding and draft oxen, animals desperately needed to convey agricultural and construction burdens. Partido cattle can also provide milk and its derivatives to a family, products for which Ignacianos yearn, yet so rarely consume since they are unavailable. An animal from the increase of the partido herd may occasionally be slaughtered for meat, though this is rare since most partidarios do not have cattle in sufficient numbers to both meet other expenditures and supply meat. Partidarios usually, therefore, depend on wild game and fish for protein.

The shares arrangement, however, by no means always fulfills its promises to the partidario. If, for example, the

animals are struck by disease, or the death rate in the capital herd is unusually high, or if the rate of increase is low for whatever reason, the arrangement can spell consequences ranging from merely low gains to economic disaster for the affected household. Such is the case because it is with its cattle increase that the household procures its necessities. These often include foodstuffs, since forest for making gardens is not within reach of all ranches in the area; moreover, only a large household can both effectively tend cattle and cultivate gardens. There is a tendency for partidario households to partially meet this problem by exchanging dairy products, especially cheese, which is always in demand, for vegetable foodstuffs with any nearby gardeners. But as already noted, some ranchers limit this practice by restrictive clauses in the partido contract. On the strength of his cattle increase, then, both actual and what is reckoned to come, the partidario obtains necessities and beyond through exchange and credit, quite often with the rancher who supplied the capital herd. It is not uncommon for Ignacianos to emerge from these arrangements without undisputed claim to a single animal.

Two other such labor arrangements, porcentaje ("percentage") and alquiler ("renting"), as they are called, exist in the area, though neither is common and the latter is very rare. Porcentaje involves entrusting a capital herd of, say, 200 herd to an individual who will care for it for a term of



perhaps five years. As recompense, the receiving individual takes an agreed-upon percentage--commonly fifteen percent--of the offspring yearly, the remainder going to the provider of the capital herd. The alquiler arrangement is the simplest of the three forms. A rancher simply turns over a herd of perhaps 200 head, females of calving age only, to an individual who agrees to return double the amount, also in females of calving age only, at the end of, say, five years. The receiving individual, who must supply the bulls, is free to sell the cattle or otherwise do with them in the meantime as he wishes. The only requirement is that twice the number of cattle received be returned at the close of the term. This arrangement, logically, never involves a peasant, whose financial state would make him a poor risk from the rancher's point of view.

The larger ranchers of the area are very ambitious and very expansionist, always complaining of a lack of land, always pressuring to buy the lands and cattle of smaller ranchers. Most of the large ranchers have airplanes, some of them have two, which they use to visit their numerous and usually highly dispersed puestos, or ranches, each equipped with a small grass airstrip. It is the large ranchers who maintain contacts with meat buyers in the highlands and who slaughter in large quantities. The smaller ranchers, on the other hand, generally have no such contacts and cannot slaughter in quantities adequate to achieve economies of

scale. A small rancher, for example, cannot slaughter in quantities sufficient to fill a single meat flight, a problem which occasionally leads five or six small ranchers to combine carcasses in order to fill such flights, which are known as vuelos hormigueros ("ant flights"). More often, however, small ranchers simply sell their cattle ready for slaughter to one of three or four large ranchers, known as comercializadores ("commercializers") of cattle, who in turn arrange for slaughter and sale. Comercializadores buy such cattle from small ranchers either on the hoof or by carcass weight determined at the time of slaughter, but at a price always below what the small rancher would otherwise receive were he to deal directly with highland buyers. The small rancher is thereby assured of prompt payment and relieved of the burden of pasturing the cattle nearby while awaiting arrangements to be made for the slaughter and flight as well as awaiting weather conditions propitious for flying.

The small rancher of the area is in an economic bind. Often unable to turn a reasonable profit from the sale of beef alone, he turns to petty commerce in dairy products or foodstuffs such as corn and rice, crops occasionally grown on the ranch. One such small rancher mentally calculates a yearly outlay of roughly 18,200 pesos in salaries for two men, and another 9,000 pesos in food rations for the men. The ration does not include meat, for the costs would then

be too high with only 300 head or so of cattle. The workers are supplied instead with ammunition so that they can hunt wild meat. With the same personnel, the man also cultivates rice and corn on the ranch which are sold in San Ignacio as well as form part of the food ration.

His expansionist proclivities and economic preponderance, then, make the large rancher greatly resented by the small one and the object of considerable antagonism.

Three slaughterhouses cum airstrips are found within forty kilometers of the town of San Ignacio. San Antonio, the one nearest, is located at only two kilometers to the northeast and operates in conjunction with an airstrip maintained and managed by AASANA. A second slaughtering-landing complex, San Pedro, is found just south of the highway, about thirty-four kilometers to the east-northeast of the town, and a third, Santiago, is located about the same distance to the south-southeast. All of the slaughtering operations are privately owned as are also the airstrips associated with the latter two. Most of the meat leaving the area from San Antonio, which has less slaughtering capacity than the other two facilities, goes to Cochabamba and the mining centers, with an occasional shipment to La Paz or Santa Cruz. Meat from leaner or otherwise inferior cattle goes to the mines, while that of superior grade is sent to the cities. More meat leaves the area during the dry months

than during the wet ones since meat planes will not fly in foul weater and airstrips become unserviceable after prolonged and heavy rains.

Not only do the aviones carniceros, or meat planes, carry beef out of the area, but they also bring in general merchandise and foodstuffs. The "owner" of a meat flight must purchase an expreso ("express"), meaning the services of the plane and crew from their point of origin and back. Every effort is made by the owner of such an express, therefore, to procure cargo for the trip in and to fill the plane to capacity with meat for the return. The price of such an express is a function of type of plane and route flown. A DC-4 express on which the writer flew was purchased for 25,000 pesos (about \$1,250 U.S.) La Paz-San Ignacio-La Paz.

#### Conflict and Change

There is conflict in the area today between cattlemen and gardeners over land use. Cattle, which take to forested high ground for refuge and forage during the rainy season, very often invade Indian gardens and destroy all the plantings. Cattle are now everywhere, in places where ranchers fifty years ago could not have imagined putting them, and press keenly upon the land. Cattle are even crammed onto potreros naturales, or grassy glades of from fifty to one-hundred hectares found in the forested zone north of the highway and to the east of San Ignacio. Since the grasses there are

insufficient to support the high number of grazing animals, especially when the rains flood some of the glades, the cattle fan out and comb the forests for food. This, of course, is a zone with a high concentration of Indian settlements and gardens, and agricultural losses every year are high. Before the commercialization of cattle, such glades were used, if at all, only to pasture a few oxen or milk cows, usually belonging to Indian families. While the problem of cattle entering gardens is widespread in the area, it seems to be greater in the forested zones near to San Ignacio, especially those in close proximity to extensive pampas.

As a defense against such cattle invasions, Indian gardeners often erect fences of tacuara bamboo around the garden, or at least strategically at points nearby where cattle would likely enter the garden area. As it often happens, however, cattle will either crash through such barriers or enter from an unforeseen direction. Such fences do not afford much protection from the zebu, a strain both more powerful and more errant than the traditional criollo stock, the only in the area prior to commercialization. The cases are legion, therefore, of Indian farmers losing an entire year's plantings to the depredations of local cattle. And that often means taking a loan from a local White and repaying it with labor to be able to feed one's

family until another garden can be made and harvested. The following case is typical and illustrates the problem.

Juan, as he will here be called, whose garden is at about a forty-five-minute walk from San Ignacio, lost all of his plantings to invading cattle during the rainy season of early 1977 when the animals entered from a direction unforeseen by him. Juan had erected tacuara fences at other probable routes of entry. In order to purchase food for his family, Juan was forced to accept a variety of short-term labor contracts throughout the rest of the year. He tried intermittently during the dry months to prepare another garden, but for want of time could not clear in June or July, as was his practice, but was forced to clear at the close of October, a time parlously close to the onset of the rains. "May God help me if it rains," he told the writer at this time. The contretemps thus totally disrupted Juan's swidden cycle. But by the close of January, before the new garden could be harvested, cattle once again invaded and plundered the plantings. And once more Juan was forced to look for work in order to feed his family.

The dietary patterns of Ignacianos have changed with the commercialization of local cattle. The historical section of this work tried to show how Indians formerly had regular access to beef. Those who worked on the estates received it with meals or as part of the food ration, and

those who were free either had cattle or could easily barter chocolate beans or other items for fresh beef or charqui. The post-1950 scramble for cattle further reduced Indian herds and access to beef, so that today Ignacianos are forced to rely on wild game and fish almost exclusively. Further, the historical material presented in this work suggests that Ignacianos are more dependent today on wild game and fish than at any other period since early Jesuit times.

The increased market value and process of commercialization of beef have put it beyond the reach of Ignacianos. Virtually all parts of the cow have commercial value. It is the custom at the abattoir San Antonio near San Ignacio, for example, to sell a portion of the offal, including the lungs, feet, and heart, at fifty pesos the juego ("set") to meat pilots, who in turn sell each set for about three times that price in the highland cities. At the local meat market in San Ignacio, three, occasionally four, animals are slaughtered nightly and the beef sold in the early morning hours to feed the town. As has already been related, the price of this beef rose from fifteen to eighteen pesos the kilogram (with bones) during 1978, and was selling for twenty-eight pesos by January of 1980.

The White sector of the town has also known periods of local beef scarcity. In about 1971 local ranchers began to supply the town with insufficient quantities of low-grade

beef in order to take advantage of the higher prices of a lucrative export trade, especially to Brazil. Local authorities arranged only with difficulty in 1972 that one fat cow per night be slaughtered to feed the town. But beef was still scarce and after the authorities received their share, the remainder was sold during the early morning hours, mostly to the gente humilde ("poor people"), on a first-come-first-served basis. Queues were forming at 2:00 a.m. and many people were turned away when supplies sold out. It was not until about 1975, when the national government began to curtail export and control domestic beef prices, that three cows per night were slaughtered to supply the town with beef. Today, the beef slaughtered locally is provided by small ranchers nearby, not by large ones.

Ignacianos have adjusted only with great difficulty to conditions of beef scarcity. Beef was often used as a standard of comparison when Ignacianos described some variety of wild meat to the writer. No meal is complete without meat, and it is beef that is preferred. Whereas those Indians settled in the outlying areas hunt wild game, the puebleros, or town Indians, must resort to other coping strategies since all nearby forests have been virtually hunted out. Aside from its high price, beef at the morning meat market can only be had for cash, which most Indians do not often possess. Beef leftovers from the morning market are purchased by a couple of White families with kerosene



refrigerators who in turn sell small quantities to Ignacianos on credit at meat-market prices. Such petty profiteering is rampant in San Ignacio.

Another strategy of both puebleros and non-puebleros is to consume fish taken from the local lake. But fishing, with few exceptions, is a dry-season activity. A third strategy is to work as a matarife, or slaughterer, at the local abattoir, a job which is partly remunerated with beef offal. Indeed, this form of remuneration makes the job attractive to Ignacianos. The matarifes, for example, receive the head (less tongue) from which they cut away the cheek flesh, consuming it immediately or making it into charque. The tripe and udder are also commonly given to matarifes. Much of the offal, however, is now taken away by plane. In general, then, meat is especially scarce for the town Indians, who consume it less often than do those who reside in the outlying areas.

Beef lard, an item once quite available and important in the diet of Ignacianos, is now also scarce. A mashed mixture of roasted plantain and beef lard, for example, was once eaten regularly by Ignacianos. Whites, who in years past also used beef lard, now must often buy imported canned pork lard. While a few Ignacianos are raising pigs for the lard, most of them do not like the taste of pork lard and either do without lard altogether or manage occasionally

to purchase a small quantity of beef lard from one of the local stores owned by ranchers who extract it when they slaughter. The matarifes can also obtain beef lard in remuneration for their services. And some Ignacianos in the remoter upriver areas extract lard from wild animals such as the tapir and the marimono, or spider monkey, especially in April or May, when the animals are fat after feeding on the abundant fruits of the rainy season.

Just as there is a strong liking for lard in the diet, milk and milk derivatives such as cheese, curd, and blanchmange also have high traditional appeal to Ignaciano palates. But milk and cheese are now very scarce in the area, mainly because ranchers, who produce beef for the market, believe that milk should be reserved for the calves in order that they grow large and strong. This view has not been without official technical endorsement. Quoting from the English version of the report on Manuel Vivado's USAID-sponsored research:

Another extended practice is milking some or all the cows of the herd. This is extended because it provides a regular income for the cattlemen. This is specially applicable to those ranches that are close to human centers. However, it is a disadvantage on the long run for the cattlemen as the milk they use for sale is taken away from the calf and does not allow an adequate nutrition. This causes a reduced gain in weight. This practice is hard to vanish (sic) as long as the financial situation of the cattlemen does not improve so that they can rely on a regular income not

provided by milk at the sacrifice of the weight and growth of the calves. (Vivado 1966: 5).

The few dairy products that are marketed in San Ignacio today are provided irregularly by a handful of nearby small ranchers in order to supplement their incomes. The supply, however, is not adequate to meet the demand of the White sector, and price puts it beyond the reach of the Indian sector. During the writer's stay in the town, cheese would occasionally arrive by air from Cochabamba or Santa Cruz for sale in one of the local pulperías.

Many older Ignacianos are painfully aware of this forced dietary change. One old man and veteran of the Chaco War, for example, after relating to the writer how strong Ignaciano soldiers were and how well they endured the privations and sufferings of the campaign, concludes that the youth of today are weak and would not survive such hardships since they are fed only porquerías ("garbage") in contrast to the milk, cheese, blancmange, and curd that nourished his generation.

It is the access to dairy products, importantly, that in large measure makes the partido arrangement, described in the previous section, attractive to Ignacianos and often constitutes the chief reason for entering such an agreement with a White rancher.

Lastly, the commercialization of local cattle has virtually eliminated Indian access to draft oxen, and this at

the very time that maximum use could be made of them. Ignacianos are now more dispersed than before 1950, yet are forced to participate, albeit marginally, in a capricious local agricultural-produce market in order to procure necessities. The quantity of produce that can be transported with the narakuráke, or carrying pole, however, is extremely limited, and no waterway links the town with any of the garden areas. Given the numerous water-filled depressions that must be traversed in moving between the town and any of the garden zones, even small loads are conveyed with often great sacrifice of energy. This problem not only circumscribes local market participation, but also limits the length of time that a family with gardens in an outlying area can spend in the town. Indeed, the necessity of carrying food serves to deter many such families from making trips to San Ignacio.

To conclude, the two sectors of San Ignacio clash in their respective dominant economic pursuits, horticulture and ranching. The clash centers on land use, where forested high ground is necessary for both pursuits. The land tenure structure, which overwhelmingly favors the rancher, will be treated in a later chapter. But the clash is also manifest in the area of labor, to be treated also in a later chapter, for Ignacianos provide the cheap labor which is critical to the economic viability of the ranching sector. Whites,

therefore, sustain themselves economically only by maintaining Ignacianos in a dependent, servile, and subordinate position.

Notes to Chapter V

<sup>1</sup>According to meteorological data kindly provided the writer by Sr. Max Arnez V., AASANA manager of the airport in San Ignacio, 38.0 mm. of rain fell on five days in October of 1973, while 248.5 mm. fell on seven days in October of 1977. A total of 657.3 mm. fell on 33 days from September through November of 1973, while the same three-month period received 320.8 mm. on 28 days in 1977. And August of 1977 received 111.4 mm. of rain on five days!

<sup>2</sup>It is the writer's contention that these figures are low. For example, the now largest rancher in the province, reliably reputed to own about 20,000 head of cattle distributed over numerous (possibly as many as 40) ranches, or puestos, appears on Vivado's list as the owner of a single property with 1,500 head of cattle. Aside from the fact that truly accurate figures on such as herd numbers, sex and age ratios, calving ratios, and so on are kept by few ranchers in the area, discussions in government circles of imposing a head tax on Beni cattle have made ranchers extremely reluctant to divulge even approximate figures on herd numbers. Such a tax, which would theoretically provide funds to create regional infrastructures beneficial to the cattle industry, was also being discussed in 1965 (Vivado 1966: 11-12), during Vivado's study. Government teams were dispatched across the department in that year to gather the requisite information on herd numbers--especially on females of more than two years of age, on which the proposed tax was to be levied--from local ranchers as part of a cadastral survey. The results, not surprisingly, were highly incomplete and thus totally useless for tax purposes.

<sup>3</sup>After a decade of rampant inflation, the Bolivian currency unit was changed from the boliviano to the peso (1,000 bolivianos = 1.00 peso) in 1963.

<sup>4</sup>The changing "rice value" of a kilogram of fresh beef is probably a better measure of the greater relative market worth of beef than the changing rice value of a fat steer since zebu breeder bulls have been widely introduced over the past thirty years to upgrade the criollo stock, so that a "fat steer" of 1978 would represent more meat--and hence more rice--than one of 1930.

CHAPTER VI  
THE QUEST FOR MEAT, SKINS, AND PELTS

Hunting

Now virtually excluded from access to beef, Ignacianos are dependent on wild game for meat, and hunting has become a survival occupation. In contrast to fifty years ago, most hunting today is with firearms; rare is the peasant who does not own a salón, or .22-calibre rifle, and shotguns are not uncommon. Traps are employed infrequently. A handful of peasants in the upriver settlements, mostly Trinitarios, occasionally hunt with the bow and arrow. Also in contrast to fifty years ago, Ignacianos today commonly hunt at night with a flashlight.

Ignacianos prefer to hunt with the aid of dogs, though not all hunters possess them. Men rarely hunt alone: the fear of snakebite, of attack by some animal, or of a variety of possible accidents are all natural reasons that discourage the practice. Among the supernatural reasons that deter solitary hunting is the fear of being led deeply into the forest by spirits and becoming lost. About five or six men, representing, say, four households, seems to be the upper limit on the size of hunting parties, for the custom of dividing the collective take equally among all households

represented effectively limits party size through a law of diminishing meat returns. Most parties consist of only two men representing one or two households. Two large white-lipped peccaries supplied one household known to the writer, consisting of four adults and four children, with meat for two weeks.

It is principally the forest that is exploited for wild meat, only marginally the pampa. The ciervo, or swamp deer, is sometimes taken in curiches, while the giant eggs of the píyu, or ostrich, are infrequently found and collected on the pampa. The bulk of the wild meat is provided by the agouti (jochi pintado), the armadillo, the tapir, and the peccaries, both collared and the highly gregarious white-lipped varieties. Both the hurina and the huaso, varieties of small deer, are also taken. Of the avians, wild ducks and curassows are hunted when available, but the latter are now fairly rare. Monkeys are sometimes hunted, especially the marimono, or spider monkey, the meat of which is considered quite good. The meat of the howler monkey, on the other hand, an animal so abundant in the area, is eaten only when other animals are unavailable. The liver of the land turtle is considered a delicacy, while eggs from the river turtle are sometimes eaten in season.

Like so much else in the region, the availability of game varies considerably between the wet and dry seasons.



With the onset of heavy rains and the flooding of much of the pampas and low forest, all life takes to high ground, where the terrestrial fauna gather on lomas, or stretches of elevated terrain surrounded by water. Aside from the obstacles posed for human movement by such conditions, hunting at this time is easier and more rewarding since game is concentrated and circumscribed. While a dog always facilitates the hunt, it is possible, at least in certain zones, to take game without the aid of a dog during this time. At the close of the rainy season, which is also the fruiting season, animals are fatter than at any other time of the year.

During the winter dry months, by contrast, game disperse over the land in search of water and food. This generally means, at least for the tapir and peccaries, a retreat to low areas of forest that retain water and support sedges such as patujú (Heliconia). Animals hide in such areas and can be exceedingly difficult to find. By August or September, at the peak of the dry season, hunters often have to go quite far in search of quarry; it is next to impossible to hunt successfully, certainly in some zones, without a dog at this time.

Availability of game also varies greatly from one zone to another. Certain zones, because of frequent human penetration from heavily populated nearby settlements, have been hunted out. The forests surrounding San Ignacio to a distance

of five kilometers or more, for example, constitute such a zone. Only with great difficulty, or suerte ("luck"), can any game be taken there, and then only with a good hunting dog. Game is even scarce in the forests to the east of town and north of the highway due to the heavy and frequent human penetration of recent years. The residents of that zone depend on fish, taken from the Sénero to the south in the dry season, and occasionally engage in the petty exchange of agricultural products for meat and cheese with the mayordomos of ranches to the north. Hunters from the five or six families that live in the forests beyond Lake Isidoro to the west-northwest of town, a sparsely populated zone of uninterrupted forest that extends to the Apére and where game is held to be still relatively abundant, commonly spend at least two days away from home while hunting, and sometimes remain out for as long as four days. One such party hunted for four days when the writer was in the zone and returned with nothing even though hunting dogs were used.

Moving up the River Apére, on the other hand, a zone into which numerous Ignacianos have migrated in recent years, game is more plentiful, especially the white-lipped peccary, now almost never encountered in forests near the town. But even in this area faunal numbers are now dwindling: cabildo leaders of the large Trinitario village of Carmen, high on the Cabito, an affluent of the Apére, were talking of moving

the settlement when the writer was there in October of 1978. The reasons given for the contemplated resettlement was scarcity of game nearby and the resulting distances (and thus time) that hunters were having to traverse in order to procure meat. Ignacianos say that game abounds along the Cubereni, by contrast, a river that parallels the Apére to the west and the forested levies of which remain virtually unsettled.

It is hard for the writer to accurately assess the impact of now ubiquitous foraging cattle on faunal distributions, though there is evidence that such distributions are being affected. The ciervo, or swamp deer, which inhabits curiches and other low areas of the pampa, flees an area when cattle enter. Logic would suggest that during the rainy season, when cattle often enter the forests to feed, there is competition with wild fauna for food. Both cattle and peccaries, for example, feed on leaves of the motacú and chonta palms. It would seem, therefore, that areas of forest that have been stripped of all accessible vegetation by foraging cattle could hardly accommodate a large terrestrial fauna.

"It is meat that is hard to come by," the writer was so often told by Ignacianos settled everywhere. Indeed, availability of wild meat is a factor that now strongly influences choice of settlement site. Before the commercialization of cattle, wild game and fish were supplementary foods and gave variety to the diet. The situation of relative

abundance of wild fauna in those times contrasts painfully in the minds of older Ignacianos with the current situation of scarcity. The white-lipped peccary, the spider monkey, and the curassows could all be easily hunted by Ignacianos living in the town at 1930. To find these animals now, one must ascend the rivers to the southwest of town. One old Ignaciano expresses the contrast in vivid terms:

Birds (i.e., curassows) and everything have gone away, they're far now. Everything here (i.e., near San Ignacio) has been exterminated, even the birds, for now there are many hunters and not even the young animals are left to grow. The game has gone to remote areas, to high forest; only there can it be found. Before, the collared peccary was everywhere in the forests surrounding the town, the agouti also; behind the cemetery you could hunt agouti then. Today not even rats can be hunted nearby. There are so many people now, so many hunters.

### Fishing

Fish have always supplemented and given variety to the Ignaciano diet. In preference, however, fish ranks below the wild meats discussed above. One Ignaciano describes fish as "the food of the poor," and fish such as the palometa ("piranha"), ubiquitous in the area, and the ventón, both widely consumed by peasants in season, are often described by local Whites as "camba food." Most fishing today is done with hook and line, though stupeficients, net scoops, weirs, arrows (propelled by "slingshots"), and gigs

are also used. A great variety of fish are found in the lakes and rivers of the region, only a few of which are mentioned in the geography section of this work.

Fishing is overwhelmingly a dry-season activity. This is so because only after the waters recede do fish become concentrated as they press on limited food resources. While some fishing is done with hook and line during the rainy season, the catch relative to time spent is so small as to hardly justify the effort. Fishing techniques vary with the kind of body of water--i.e., whether rivers, pozas, lakes, and so on--from which fish are taken as well as with the stage of the dry season. By June or July, for example, the waters have receded and left numerous watery depressions filled with smaller fish such as wachere, which can be taken with a net scoop known as a chipa, or yutá'e in Ignaciano. The scoop consists of a loose cotton net affixed to a pampean reed bent to a circular form of about one meter in diameter. A line of women, who make and generally wield the scoops, typically forms in water to the waist on one side of a depression while an opposing line of men advances toward them flailing the water with sticks or thongs, thus driving the fish toward the women who collect them with the scoops. The technique can also be practiced in the river when the water is low.

Another traditional fishing technique involves the construction of a weir, or tama, across a stream when the water

is low--i.e., during July, August, or September--and the stream narrow. Consisting of poles lashed tightly together, the weir is surmounted by a platform, or chapapa, of about two meters width which is set parallel to and about fifty centimeters above water level. Atop the chapapa is then placed a layer of leaves which is in turn covered with mud so that the fish will cling to the chapapa once caught. The fisherman then heads downstream of the structure a short distance, enters the water and drives the fish upstream by flailing the water with a stick or thongs. In trying to breast the obstruction, the fish jump and fall onto the chapapa. Chief of those fish caught with the tama is the ventón, a fish notorious for its saltatory behavior.

Stupefacients are used less often by Ignacianos than by Trinitarios, and then only when other techniques are unavailing. The stupefacient most commonly used is the resin of the ochoó tree (Hura crepitans). In the upriver communities, settled heavily by Trinitarios, weirs are sometimes built in the dry season at the mouths of streams. A small amount of the ochoó resin is released well upstream of the weir, which serves to slowly drive the fish toward the dam, where they are arrowed or gilled.

Some Ignacianos residing in San Ignacio consume fish taken from Lake Isidoro, especially samapi, a gregarious fish that can be easily arrowed or gilled from a canoe in

the shallows during the dry season. Samapi are found only in lakes. Generally, lake fish are deemed inferior to those found in rivers and streams because the meat is held to be dryer.

Fish consumption varies considerably from one zone to another. The upriver settlements, predictably, consume much fish, whereas those settlements to the north of the highway consume less since to catch them entails a trip to the Sénero.

### The Quest for Skins and Pelts

There is in the area of San Ignacio today a thriving commercial traffic, much of it contraband, in the skins and pelts of numerous wild fauna. The English distinction between "skins" and "pelts" corresponds to the local distinction made in Spanish between cueros and pieles. The former term refers to the hides of caymans, both the caimán and the lagarto, as well as to those of peccaries, the taitetú and the puerco de tropa. The latter term, on the other hand, refers to hides valued for their fur, such as those of felines.

It was not until about 1945 that the skins and pelts of local fauna began to assume commercial value. Caimán hides were the first to enter the market, followed soon thereafter by the pelt of the londra, or common river otter (Lutra), the value of which subsequently rose sharply. Lagarto hides assumed value in the early 1950's, as did the pelt of

the lobo de agua, or giant river otter (Pteroneura). By the late 1950's the pelts of the felines, especially the tigre, gato montés, and león, were extremely valuable and in much demand. And then the skins of the peccaries, the capybara (Hydrochoerus), and the pelt of the zorro de monte, or forest fox (Cerdocyon thous), entered the market. There was a further rise in the local price paid for these latter three in about 1976.

A new era in hunting technology and practices began with the commercial exploitation of fauna. Whereas hunting in the area had been by tradition a daytime activity, the commercial exploitation of caymans involved combining the lakes and rivers with a flashlight at night. Many Ignacianos, who fear the lakes, rivers, and forests at night, were reluctant to participate in such exploitation during the early years, so that much of the initial hunting was done by Whites. One such local White hunter was instructed in the technique of nocturnal hunting by an Argentine buyer of hides, who also provided each of his hunters with a Mauser, ammunition, a light with batteries, salt, and a cash advance.

The decade of the 1950's also witnessed the introduction and spread of firearms throughout the area, an item which few Ignacianos had prior to 1950, when hunting in the game-rich forests was done with traps, spears, arrows, and clubs, almost always with the aid of dogs. It was with the lucrative commercialization of cat pelts, when buyers supplied



Ignaciano hunters with traps and other supplies, that the salón, or .22-calibre rifle, became generalized among Ignacianos. By 1965 Ignacianos were heavily involved in the commercial hunting of local fauna, including the cayman, and were also freely using firearms to procure meat, often by hunting at night. Many local Whites argue that the more lucrative pursuit of skins and pelts led Ignacianos to neglect their cacao groves and their gardens, thus causing a sharp decline in the production of foodstuffs for the local market.

According to one informed source, all skins and pelts taken from the Beni except peccary hides, which go to Cochabamba, leave the country for Paraguay via Santa Cruz. Most of this traffic is contraband. There are known buyers in San Ignacio, who frequently advise peasants in the area by local radio to bring skins and pelts to them "for good prices." But the bulk of the trade is in the hands of a half-dozen or so comerciantes ("traders") who ply the Apére and its tributaries in small canoes in order to exchange necessities and consumer goods with riverine Indians, Trinitarios and Ignacianos, for skins and pelts. There are Indians in this upriver area, known as cazadores ("hunters"), who do not make gardens but rather depend entirely on hunting and the sale of skins and pelts for a livelihood.

This trade, which can be quite rewarding for comerciantes, turns on credit: trade items are obtained by comerciantes on

credit from merchants, either in San Ignacio or Trinidad, and taken upriver for exchange, also on credit, against skins and pelts. Such upriver transactions never involve cash, and skins and pelts are overwhelmingly the desired form of debt cancellation from the point of view of the comerciante, who, of course, profits dually on each transaction: once from the marked-up sale price of the trade item and again later from the sale of the skin or pelt. The latter are usually taken to Trinidad, where buyers pay cash with which the comerciante then cancels debts outstanding with his merchant suppliers.

One local buyer of skins and pelts, a small rancher involved in a variety of commercial activities and with contacts in Santa Cruz, bought in San Ignacio (for cash) and sold in Santa Cruz at the following prices in October of 1977 (about 20.00 pesos = \$1.00 U.S.);

<u>Animal</u>	<u>Purchase Price, San Ignacio</u>	<u>Sale Price, Santa Cruz</u>
<u>Tigre</u> (jaguar)	2,000	2,800
<u>Gato onza</u> (ocelot)	1,200	1,700
<u>Lobo</u> (large river otter)	500	700
<u>Taitetú</u> (collared peccary)	50	70
<u>Zorro</u> (forest fox)	50	100
<u>Tejón</u> (badger)	50	100
Capybara	50	100

The above prices are for high-quality skins and pelts of adult specimens. The bulk of this buyer's product was supplied by a school teacher in one of the upriver communities, who is also a comerciante there.

The comerciantes in the upriver area operate somewhat differently. One such comerciante known to the writer advertises an upriver price which he professes to pay for each type of skin or pelt. The price, however, is not a cash price but rather the peso value of merchandise which he sells. Accordingly, the price paid for a collared peccary skin is 50 pesos, but in merchandise. A long machete, which costs the trader 80 pesos (wholesale cash price) in Trinidad, is advertised in the upriver communities for 150 pesos, though in skins or pelts rather than in cash. Three collared-peccary hides, therefore, will fetch a long machete, and it is in such terms that the Indians along the rivers tend to reckon trade. The comerciante will in turn receive 75 pesos per peccary hide in Trinidad when selling in quantities of less than 100 hides, or 85 pesos per hide for 100 hides or more. A machete costing 80 pesos, therefore, fetches three peccary hides upriver which can be sold in Trinidad at from 225 to 255 pesos, a gross profit of from 280 to 320 percent. Among the dozen or so tribal Chimanés settled two days by trail to the west of one of the remote upriver communities, by contrast, the same comerciante receives five collared-peccary hides for one long machete.

The trader in question, who resumed operations in March of 1978 after an absence of some months, had working for him fifteen cazadores (all Trinitarios), or hunters, in the upriver area. The following quantities of skins and pelts were collected by the trader, mostly through his cazadores, between March and late October of 1978: 693 hides of taitetú (collared peccary"), 36 hides of puerco de tropa ("white-lipped peccary"), 1 hide of capybara, 32 meters of caimán ("large cayman") hide, 72 hides of lagarto ("small cayman"), 2 pelts of tigre ("jaguar"), 16 pelts of gato montés ("wildcat"), and 26 pelts of lobo ("large river otter").

The trader's goal was to have collected by the end of the year the following quantities: 1,000 hides of taitetú, 60 meters of caimán hide, 150 lagarto hides, 25 pelts of gato montés, and 50 pelts of lobo. He noted further that taitetú hides sustained his operations and provided the bulk of his capital. It was this trader's hope to have accumulated by the end of 1979, 100,000 pesos (about \$5,000 U.S.) in liquid capital, 50,000 from the sale of skins and pelts and another 50,000 from the sale of a few head of cattle that he owned. He then planned to invest in a gasoline chain saw and a motor for his canoe. With the chain saw he would cut more mara (mahogany), hire more Indian master craftsmen, and thus expand his commercial production of oxcart wheels and canoes for sale downriver. And with the motor he would cover a greater

territory on the rivers and thus expand his commerce in skins and pelts.

There is some seasonal variation in prices received by traders for hides and pelts. It is forbidden by law to hunt or traffic in the hides of caymans (i.e., caimán and lagarto) from mid-August until the first of the year. In Trinidad during this period in 1978 the price paid for caimán hide dropped from about 180 to 120 pesos per meter of "wet" hide. Feline and otter pelts rise slightly in price during the winter dry months: the price paid (1978) for gato montés pelts in Trinidad climbed from 1,650 to 1,800 pesos (about \$90 U.S.), while that paid for lobo pelts moved from 600 to 800 pesos. One trader in such pelts in San Ignacio could offer no explanation for the rise in price at this time, but it is the writer's conjecture that the rise is attributable to the relative scarcity of all game during the winter dry season. It has been legally forbidden in Bolivia for about ten years to hunt or traffic at anytime in the pelts of felines or river otters. Such laws notwithstanding, there is currently in the area a thriving commerce in such skins and pelts that depends on clandestine activity, bribes, and in the case of caimán and lagarto, on the practice of holding the hides of already-hunted animals off the market until the season opens.

Conflict and Change

The commercialization of hides and pelts, and the concomitant new hunting technology, which has led to the generalization of firearms among the peasants, has had profound consequences for both the natural and the human social environments. According to Ignacianos, the londra, or common river otter, is now extinct in the province, while the caimán is in danger of soon becoming so. The writer, during eighteen months of moving about the province, never saw a single live caimán. And a sixteen-year-old Indian lad, who crosses Lake Isidoro often en route to the family gardens well to the other side, has likewise never seen one. This is in stark contrast to the faunal picture at 1940, when caimanes were everywhere, including at river and lake ports, where they posed a threat to travellers. But soon thereafter the picture changed, for, as one man put it, those same ports as well as the shores of Lake Isidoro glinted white with the bleached bones of caymans.

The consequences of the traffic in hides and pelts are serious indeed for Ignacianos. This is so because the commercialization of faunal skins and pelts has paralleled in time another such process, that of the commercialization of local beef cattle. This latter process has forced the Indians into a near-total dependence on wild game for meat. Ignacianos have now been hunting game with firearms, a most efficient way, for about twenty years. While the numbers of a variety

of faunal food species have dwindled ominously in recent years vis-à-vis the rifle, two species, the collared and white-lipped peccaries, both now basic food animals, are also pursued for the commercial value of their hides. Whereas virtually all hunters for meat will remove the hide for its commercial value, for some hunters that value constitutes the chief motive for pursuit of the animal. Accordingly, there are now hunters in the upriver area who remove the hides from peccaries and leave the meat to rot in the forest. One older Ignaciano, who evinces an unusual percipience in his understanding of the problem in historical terms, returns in time to the close of the Chaco War and relates the following:

There was wild cattle hereabouts then, cattle with no brand, no owner. We hunted this cattle for meat, and so fat it was, too. Wild meat was also eaten, but the skins and pelts then had no value. Nobody bought jaguar pelts then. It was not then as it is now, when every animal is skinned. It's all different now.

We hunted with dogs then, chasing the taitetú into its hole. Six or so of them would enter a hole, but we would pull them out, kill them, and divide the meat. But how can we divide the hide now that it is like money?

Jaguars were then common near the town; women would often encounter them at the nearby stream. Now everything is scarce, everything has been killed off. The taitetú was then abundant in the forests nearby, for hunters were few. Caimanes were then seen at all ports of the area; one was afraid to cross the rivers, so

many of them there were. But now there are no caimanes, or perhaps only two or three that never show themselves. Everything has changed, everything. There is now no game anywhere nearby because everybody hunts with firearms. Rifles are everywhere. For this reason Ignacianos must go far from San Ignacio in order to live, in order to hunt and make gardens. There's fish, sure, but we can't rely on them, for fish won't bite a hook in the rainy season. Now (March 10), for example, fish are everywhere in that river (The Sénero), but one could fish there for an entire day without catching anything. Only in the dry season can fish be taken.

The pursuit of hides and pelts, and now the urgent pursuit of meat, clash with the native belief system, which holds that all wild animals belong to the ichíniana, or forest spirits. Due regard for those spirit owners, on whose will human welfare partially depends, is achieved through adherence to certain rules that govern hunting. The spirit owners, for example, do not approve of night hunting, but if such is a must, a hunter should not hunt the night through. Nor should he hunt on consecutive days or nights, but rather intersperse hunting days with days of other activities. And no animal should be killed only for its hide, nor should the meat of a hunted animal be abandoned in the forest.

To disregard these rules is to incur the wrath of the spirit owners, whose common response is to remove the animals



from man's reach. The current scarcity of game in certain zones is so explained by many Ignacianos. A second response open to the spirit owners is that of bewitchment of the offending hunter. Ignacianos, for whom much sickness, even death, is commonly thought to be of supernatural provenience, often attribute human afflictions to the brujerías ("bewitchments") of spirits. Local lore is rife with stories of hunters who, after violating one of the above rules, succumb to sickness or death.

Perhaps not surprisingly, there is today evidence among Ignacianos of much anxiety associated with hunting, especially nocturnal hunting. Ignacianos tell of frightful sights and sounds encountered by hunters in the forest at night. One such story is about a man who hunted at night in order to sell the meat during the day. The man met up with a pair of huge eyes one night, fired at them in panic, then turned and ran posthast to his house with great fear, where he soon took sick, began to vomit, and almost died. And other stories tell of fearsome encounters with the Devil in the forest at night.

This divergence of belief and practice is the cause of social tension. Some Ignacianos, especially the older ones, are now critical of those hunters who avidly pursue game only for skins and pelts, arguing that such behavior angers the ichíniana, who in turn hide the animals from all hunters.

The cacique of Carmen del Cabito, an upriver Trinitario community where there is currently talk of relocating the settlement because meat is now scarce in the area, are outspokenly critical of the hide-pelt hunters there.

The native belief system also addresses itself to the taking of fish since they belong to the á'eana, or water spirits. And as with hunting, there are rules that govern fishing. One must, for example, not fish on consecutive days or nights, fish must always be taken with a sense of measure, and meat must never be thrown away. In response to a violation of the rules, the á'eana can withdraw the fish; a fisherman may attribute lack of success with a hook and line, for example, to some previous rule violation which led the á'eana to hide the fish. The water spirits can also bewitch in retribution, causing sickness or death. Eruptive diseases (small pox and measles excepted), for example, are often attributed to bewitchments of the á'eana. One older Ignaciano, critical of those individuals who now take samapi from Lake Isidoro in order to sell them in San Ignacio, relates the following story:

There was once a fisherman, an old man, who had fished since his youth. Fishing was his livelihood, and he fished every day. He would catch fish in quantities in order to sell them and thus buy clothes, lard, salt, sugar, and so on.

When he was an old man, as I am now, he was fishing out in the middle of the lake when a voice called out from the

water: "Listen," it said. "Listen, friend, this is enough; you are not to return to fish for more." The voice came from the á'eana, who were angry with the old man for his excessive fishing.

The old fisherman eventually died; they say that he sweated blood just before his death. The á'eana had robbed him of his shadow (sombra), had covered it with a cawarasi (large ceramic bowl). At the time of his death, the old man said to his son: "I'm done for, son, I'm going to die. My shadow is in the lake; the á'eana have covered it with a cawarasi."

The chipa, or net scoop, is no longer used with the frequency that it was in, say, 1930. Older Ignacianos say that this is because most of the former lakelets and depressions are now overgrown with a thick mat of vegetation, thus making human entry and use of the chipa impossible. Some Ignacianos attribute such mats to the work of the á'eana, who, they claim, are angry with Ignacianos for having removed fish in unreasonable quantities. Another explanation, however, cites the extermination of the lagarto, or small cayman, an animal that is held to keep lakelets free of such vegetation. Perhaps also worthy of note is that the parties that in former times fished with the chipa were quite large, often including twenty women or more. One might fairly speculate, therefore, that the human dispersion of recent times makes it more difficult for such parties to form. In this regard, the writer recalls one older Ignaciano who had reservations about using stupeficients to fish,

arguing that such gratuitous stunning of fish in quantities could anger the á'eana because all of the meat could not be consumed.

To summarize, the commercialization of beef cattle, which has benefited the White sector exclusively, has made beef inaccessible to Ignacianos and thus forced them into an almost total dependence on wild game and fish. The process of commercialization of the skins and pelts of wild fauna, including food animals such as the peccary, has also benefited primarily the White sector and has paralleled the process of beef commercialization, so that wild game is now scarce in the area. The commercial traffic in skins and pelts has also led to the generalization of firearms, especially the .22-calibre rifle, among Ignacianos, with the result that game supplies have further dwindled. Fish are abundant in the area, but can only be taken in quantities sufficient for subsistence during the dry season. Further, the current pursuit of skins and pelts as well as of wild meat has placed Ignacianos in conflict with their own belief system, which holds that wild animals and fish belong to spirit owners who grow angry and punish Ignacianos when the latter hunt or fish excessively.

CHAPTER VII  
LABOR AND EXCHANGE: THE SHORTAGE OF PURCHASING POWER

There is today among Ignacianos a desperate need for cash, or at least purchasing power, and a corresponding dearth of ways adequate to meet that need. Salt, lard, laundry soap, kerosene, cartridges, clothes (or cloth), flashlight and batteries, cutting tools, fishhooks, anodynes, and medicaments for the relief of stomach and a host of other common ailments are all items which qualify as basic necessities and which must be obtained from outside the household. Cane alcohol, sold in considerable quantities and one of the most lucrative items in the spectrum of trade goods, might also qualify as a necessity because of its high demand for medicinal, ceremonial, and recreational uses. Not only must common necessities be procured, but large contingency expenditures such as those associated with prolonged illness must also be met. And Ignacianos, like people elsewhere, confront this need for purchasing power in two broad ways: through providing personal labor and through the exchange of material goods.

Labor

Long-term labor opportunities in the area are few and are nearly all ranch related. Aside from the partido

arrangement already discussed, which from the point of view of the rancher is a labor device, ranches employ mayordomos, or overseers, and mozos, or cowhands, as described in the section on ranching. Mayordomos typically receive a monthly salary of from 800 to 1,000 pesos and a food ration which includes such items as sugar, lard, salt, rice, and corn. Also part of the ration is a steer slaughtered monthly from the herd. Mozos, who work under the mayordomo, receive a monthly salary of from 500 to 600 pesos as well as a portion of the food ration, including meat from the slaughtered steer. If forest is available nearby, ranch workers often supplement the food ration, which may not be sufficient in the case of large families, by making gardens. Indeed, employees on some of the smaller ranches are forced to both maintain gardens and hunt for meat since food rations are minuscule to nonexistent. Ideally, ranchers also provide workers with medical and other benefits, but there is much variation in this regard from one ranch to another. The terms of employment, including social benefits, are usually stipulated in written contracts of one-year duration. Numerous interviews both with and about such permanent ranch employees suggest a high labor turnover as peasants move about in hopes that suerte ("luck") will lead them to a buen patrón ("good patrón"), or otherwise improve their lot.

A smattering of permanent jobs is provided by a local branch of Servicio Nacional de Caminos (SNC), whose work

consists of maintaining the new highway and flying bridges. Such jobs have about them a certain luster for younger Ignacianos, not only because they are rewarding in terms of good salaries and social benefits, but also because the work is seen as less demanding than that associated with either agriculture or the care of cattle. To operate heavy equipment or drive a truck for SNC are veritable dream jobs for young Ignaciano men.

Permanent employment opportunities for women outside of the native household are even fewer. Many of the White households in San Ignacio employ Indian cooks and nursemaids. A cook typically receives 500 pesos monthly, meals for herself and any young children, and Sunday afternoons and evenings free. This is not a desirable occupation from the point of view of an Indian woman, and many women so employed have lost their husbands through death or abandonment and view the job as temporary.

Short-term labor opportunities, largely ranch related and virtually restricted to the dry season, are more numerous. It is through such labor that necessities requiring larger cash outlays, such as clothes, are often obtained. It is through such labor also that debts previously incurred are cancelled. Dry-season ranch activities that call for a temporary augmentation of the labor force include branding, castrating, vaccinating, the planting of potrero grasses, and the erection and repair of fences and house structures.

Most ranchers prefer that there be at least a few peasants settled near the ranch, or even on it, from which they can draw for such dry-season labor and sometimes from which they can purchase garden produce to make up the food ration of ranch personnel.

The construction and repair of house structures in San Ignacio occupies some Ignacianos during the dry season, as does also the fabrication of clay bricks and tiles in one of the local brick works. A dozen or so men work irregularly as matarifes ("slaughterers") at the local airstrip abattoir, where they receive forty pesos (about \$2.00 U.S.) plus offal for each carneo, or slaughtered planeload. Women often work part-time as laundresses and are paid in accordance with the type of garment laundered--i.e., whether shirt, pants, socks, and so on.

Men can work on a short-term basis as jornaleros ("day laborers"), mensualeros ("month laborers"), or contratistas ("contract workers"). The daily wage for the area is fifty pesos (about \$2.50 U.S.) seco ("dry"), or without food. If a noon meal is supplied, the wage may drop to as low as thirty-five pesos. Much dry-season work is done on a contract, or job basis, especially larger tasks such as the construction of a house or the erection of a fence. A written document specifying the terms may or may not be drawn up. Many Ignacianos prefer contract work to other forms since



there is less intervention by a patrón to clock and supervise job activities.

Most Ignacianos strongly dislike working for Whites and will avoid doing so whenever possible. One crude estimate has it that no more than one-third of all Ignacianos work for a patrón on a regular basis. As noted previously, of the various patrón-peon arrangements, that of working cattle on a shares basis (al partido) is the most attractive. To canchear ("to grub," or "to hustle"), or engage in short-term labor for a White, is seen as a necessary evil, and complaints are ubiquitous of low pay, of White failures to honor the terms of a work agreement, and of White attempts to remunerate labor with merchandise, often not needed, instead of with cash.

#### Material Exchange

Ignacianos also seek to meet their need for purchasing power through the exchange of crafts and products from garden and forest. While material exchanges between Ignacianos tend not to involve cash, such exchanges between Ignacianos and Whites frequently do, especially in the town of San Ignacio. It is often said by Ignacianos that every man has his arte ("craft," or "skill"). Accordingly, an individual may carve rifle stocks for sale, or make furniture, or fashion wooden vessels for grinding grain, or elaborate canoes or

cart wheels, though these latter two items now come mostly from Trinitarios upriver where hardwoods such as mahogany are abundant. One or two men still evince considerable artistry in the carving of masks, temple saints, and other wooden figures, though this art is now rapidly vanishing. Some women have retained the art of making cotton hammocks and blankets, which are occasionally sold to local Whites on order, but only a handful of older women can still weave the more traditional intricate patterns. Making gardens is also held to be an arte, for some Ignacianos are much more adept at it than are others.

Apart from the massive traffic in hides and pelts, there is a petty traffic in other natural products. Perea, a cotton-like substance produced by a balsa tree, gathered and sold by Ignacianos to Whites, who resell it in Trinidad or use it as stuffing for pillows and mattresses. Numerous town-dwelling Ignacianos collect and sell firewood, which is consumed locally in considerable quantities. Samapi, a fish common in the local lake, is sometimes caught at night and hawked by young Indian children on the streets of San Ignacio at dawn, and wild meat is infrequently sold in town. Palm hearts from the motacú are sometimes bought from Indian women by Whites, who eat them with pork when the latter is available. Ignacianos can supply a variety of forest products upon request: one man, for example, periodically fills

the order of an herbalist in Trinidad for an array of specified herbs.

Ignacianos supply the local market with the entire spectrum of food crops. There is no physical market, or "market place," in San Ignacio for agricultural produce, though the structure where beef is slaughtered and sold to the town at early morning is termed mercado ("market"). Either the product is peddled from house to house or word of its availability at a specified location is diffused, sometimes by a noon radio message, throughout the White sector of town. Both the large number of agricultural producers relative to non-producer consumers (some White ranchers make gardens with peasant labor) and the usually desperate need of peasants to market produce immediately, tend to depress prices paid to Ignaciano gardeners. This state of affairs, coupled with a lack of means to transport produce from now highly dispersed settlements, makes for little peasant incentive to produce for the market in San Ignacio.

Some Ignacianos still harvest from inherited cacao and coffee groves near the town. An arroba of dry cacao beans fetched about 250 pesos at the beginning of the harvest in 1978 and 300 pesos at the close. In early February of that year, such an arroba brought 270 pesos in San Ignacio, 400 in Trinidad, and 600 in La Paz. While some cacao is bought at this time by owners of local pulperías for the

later sale of chocolate in town, or by individuals for household consumption, by far the bulk is bought by sixteen or so local rescatadores ("resellers") who in turn ship the dry beans by air for sale in the lucrative high-land markets of La Paz or Cochabamba. Some cacao also makes its way to such rescatadores in Trinidad. By July or August, few Ignacianos have cacao, and by November chocolate cannot be bought anywhere in San Ignacio. Much of the cacao purchased by rescatadores is contracted for well in advance of harvest at about fifty pesos per arroba with Ignacianos who are in urgent need of cash or merchandise, which is obtained on the strength of a promise of later payment in cacao.

Cacao is not as important to Ignacianos today as it was to them fifty years ago. They often complain that the trees do not bear fruit as they once did, a complaint to which local Whites often respond that Ignacianos no longer attend to the groves and keep them clean. The current dispersion and competing activities such as hunting for meat make it extremely difficult for most Ignacianos to give the groves the attentions that they need, and once so abundantly had. There is also now much robbery of cacao from Indian groves by young Whites in quest of quick and easy means to cash. The changing land tenure structure has taken many of the groves from Ignacianos and given them to Whites. Located in forest near San Ignacio, the groves are on land now

controlled by the Alcaldía. It has thus been an easy matter for Whites to solicit such land in recent years, and with it the groves. Indeed, such land has on occasion been solicited precisely because of the groves, some of which are now harvested by Whites. Many Ignacianos, therefore, are denied traditional harvest rights over trees that are on lands now titled to Whites.

What has been said about cacao can also be said for coffee, with the difference that there is generally less money to be made from the sale of coffee. The dry beans are sold by Ignacianos at the beginning of the harvest season for about 200 pesos per arroba. The bulk of coffee production goes to the same rescatadores until the price rises in August or September, when the beans are taken to Trinidad, where other rescatadores pay about 400 pesos per arroba and then dispatch much of the product downriver and into Brazil. As with cacao, much coffee is contracted for in advance by rescatadores in San Ignacio at about 40 pesos per arroba with Ignaciano grove owners. And also as with cacao, the changing land tenure structure has alienated many Ignacianos from traditional harvest rights over coffee groves.

Corn, plantains, and manioc also figure in local commerce. Corn harvested in July (1978) is sold at that time by peasants in San Ignacio for about thirty pesos per arroba, or ten pesos per mancorna (=20 ears). Some of the pulperías then resell

it locally for eight pesos per kilogram, representing a gross profit of about 300 percent. The price received by peasants climbs to from fifty to sixty pesos per arroba in October and November. Corn, however, which is planted three times yearly by some peasants, does not have much of a market in San Ignacio, where it does not figure prominently in the White diet. At the height of the rainy season, when plantains are plentiful, small racemes sell in San Ignacio for about twenty-five pesos, large ones for thirty pesos. By July the respective prices are thirty and forty pesos, whereas in October and November, when plantains are scarce, prices climb to forty and forty-five pesos for small and large racemes respectively. About thirty pesos per arroba is paid to peasants in San Ignacio for manioc when the supply is plentiful, about forty pesos when the tuber is scarce. Chivé, or fermented manioc flour, most of which now comes from the upriver settlements, sells in San Ignacio for about eighty pesos per arroba in July and for about one hundred twenty-five pesos per arroba in November and December, when scarce.

Again, the above prices are those received by peasants for products sold in San Ignacio. The prices of such products vary considerably from one outlying area to another. While there is much petty exchange--usually dairy products for items such as manioc and plantains, often not included

in the food ration--between ranch personnel and nearby peasant farmers, ranchers frequently purchase agricultural products, especially rice and corn, for their personnel food rations from nearby peasants (if such exist) at prices which are a function of supply and demand for the particular area. In the zone of extensive pampa between San Ignacio and San Francisco to the south, for example, an area with limited forest and thus limited agriculture, one Ignaciano gardener settled on an isla sells both corn and rice (unhulled) to a large rancher nearby for fifty pesos per arroba.

There is a heavy commercial traffic and much profiteering in rice, the food staple of the area. The local price of rice (unhulled) in 1978 was from twenty-five to thirty pesos per arroba at harvest season (January-March). The price had climbed to forty pesos per arroba by June, and was at fifty pesos in July of 1978. And an arroba was selling for between seventy and eighty pesos in October and November. As with cacao, much if not most of the rice marketed by peasants at harvest time is purchased by the owners of local pulperías and a handful of rescatadores, some of whom also own pulperías. And just as with cacao, much of this purchased rice is contracted for in advance of harvest at about twenty pesos per arroba. Large ranchers, a few of whom are rescatadores as well, sometimes also purchase rice for their personnel at harvest time. And some of the comerciantes who

work the upriver areas will sell trade goods on the strength of a promise of later payment in rice at below-market prices, or will simply accept rice as cancellation for other debts already incurred. This practice is probably on the rise since skins and pelts are growing increasingly scarce in the upriver areas.

The rescatadores and owners of pulperías withhold rice from the market, thus forcing prices gradually upward throughout the dry season until the next harvest. Much of the rice so accumulated is sold during this time of "scarcity" to large ranching enterprises in the downriver areas of Desengaño and Santa Ana de Yacuma, areas characterized by extensive pampa, little forest and thus little agriculture. There is, therefore, a local scarcity of rice in San Ignacio and the upriver areas from September until the first harvests at about mid-December. The writer had to purchase hulled rice from a pulpería in San Ignacio at ten pesos per kilogram for a trip he made upriver in early October, for there was no rice to be purchased in the communities there at the time. Indeed, many upriver families did not even have rice for household consumption during the months of October, November, and much of December. It is common for Ignacianos to have to buy rice for both food and seed from local pulperías and Whites from September to December, rice which will be paid with rice three or four times over once the first harvest comes in. Rice was



being sold to peasants for seed by pulperías in San Ignacio at one hundred pesos per arroba in 1975, for example. The rice sold in at least two of the local pulperías during the lean months, both owned by large ranchers, is grown in Santa Cruz and arrives in San Ignacio in the one case aboard the rancher-owner's small private plane, and in the other case by meat planes from Cochabamba.

The pulperías in San Ignacio sell on a small scale garden produce such as onions, potatoes, and carrots which arrive in San Ignacio or Trinidad by air from Santa Cruz or Cochabamba. Local Whites often cite the necessity of airlifting verduras, or green vegetables, as further evidence of the laziness of Ignacianos, who, they argue, should produce verduras for the local market. While a handful of Ignacianos do grow a few tomatoes for the local market, the production of verduras is in general not profitable. One Ignaciano, who once produced a large tomato crop in the belief that it could be profitably marketed in San Ignacio, was sadly disabused of the notion when virtually the entire crop rotted for want of buyers. Aside from other problems such as soil suitability and demands on cultivator time made by certain vegetable crops (e.g., onions) when grown in the area, it is the writer's contention that local palates are not especially attracted to verduras. Many White families who could afford to consume imported verduras regularly do not, or do so only on a modest scale. Most of

the pulpería owners buy verduras only in measured quantities, if at all, and even then sometimes cannot sell them.

As already noted, rare is the White household in San Ignacio that is not at least irregularly involved in the sale of some item or another. Both tiendas and pulperías, invariably either converted house fronts or additions to houses, are found in the town. Tiendas are more in the nature of general stores, selling hardware, clothing, and some food items, including packaged and canned goods. Pulperías, on the other hand, are primarily small grocery stores that sell a wide variety of imported and locally grown foodstuffs. With the help of an informant, the writer was able to enumerate ten tiendas in San Ignacio, six of which are owned by local ranchers. Thirty-seven pulperías were counted, at least fourteen of which are owned by ranchers. And two of these, owned by large and prosperous ranchers, are in the quality of almacenes, or store-warehouses, which purchase foodstuffs both locally and extra-locally in order to wholesale to other local pulperías. Three farmacias ("pharmacies") and one veterinary pharmacy are also found in the town, all owned by ranchers.

### Conflict and Change

Before about 1950, the Beni was virtually self-sufficient in the production of foodstuffs and many other items, all now

imported. This self-sufficiency extended to the agricultural estate, or establecimiento, and even to the free-peasant household. Candles for light, and soap for laundry, were both made from beef tallow, which also served as cooking lard. Hunting, what there was of it, was done of the day and without firearms. Although some trade in géneros ("cloth") probably dates from well into the nineteenth century, all women until about thirty years ago spun cotton thread for weaving and repairing garments. Indeed, a woman's facility in the textile craft was an important criterion to the family of a young man in the selection of his wife. While cash today has a restricted circulation in the area, especially in the peasant sector, its circulation was even more restricted in pre-1950 times, when peasant purchasing power lay in the provision of labor through debt peonage and in the exchange of such items as cacao and coffee through barter.

When local cattle and the hides and pelts of wild fauna assumed commercial value in the late 1940's and early 1950's, the region became economically specialized, so that both Ignacianos and Whites began to participate in a capitalist market that transcended the region. The freedom of Ignacianos to participate in the market was enhanced to a degree when the system of debt bondage was legally abolished and all peasant debts to patrones cancelled as part of the Agrarian Reform of 1953. The new market participation, spurred greatly

by a local increase in air traffic, brought the entry of a wide array of consumer goods to the area and an increased use of cash. Even sugar and cane alcohol, both produced locally before 1950, were soon imported from Santa Cruz, where production modes of the cane-processing industry were undergoing economic "rationalization" with the aid of foreign technology and international development capital.

The frenetic drive of the White sector for capital accumulation over the past thirty years through an expanding commerce and the sale of beef has created conditions of extreme resource scarcity for Ignacianos, whose material wants have also expanded vis-à-vis the new consumerism. Older Ignacianos talk nostalgically of pre-1950 years, when "Ignacianos were united" and when there was not the concern to weigh and measure, especially food items, that is so salient in the area today among both Whites and Indians. This concern among Ignacianos seems to be the manifestation of a subtle process that has been underway over the past thirty years whereby a market value has come to be attributed to an ever widening spectrum of material items, agricultural and otherwise, as Ignacianos have become ever more pressed for purchasing power.

This posited process is arguably the essence, if not the driving force, of a drift in native society and its scheme of values toward greater individualization and secularization respectively. Ignacianos often defamed each other to the

writer with accusations of meanness (i.e., to be mezquino, or "stingy"). While there is still much petty exchange of agricultural produce and labor in the countryside, older people say that, in contrast to former times, both are now grudgingly given, and then only in carefully measured amounts. Even sacred objects have entered the market. Shortly before the writer's arrival in the area, one of the Macheteros had been persuaded by a White to sell his elaborate feather diadem, symbol of this important group. Since all of the diadems are blessed by the priest and held to belong to the community, the offending individual was dismissed from the group.

Many Ignacianos can still neither understand the use of cash nor reckon value in cash terms, a fact known only too well to comerciantes who work the upriver areas, one of whom was forever reminding the writer that it was the "article that has value here," not cash. And an old man in San Ignacio one day called the writer to the side and whispered to him proudly that he still had a supply of the "old money" (i.e., of bolivianos, the currency unit in circulation before 1963, when rampant inflation led to monetary reform and the issuance of the peso) hidden at his house. The idea among many older Ignacianos is that the currency reform of 1963 made money less valuable.

In summary, then, the commercialization of beef cattle has abruptly cast both Indians and Whites into a cash economy

with its increased demand for consumer goods and heightened degree of commercial activity. This process of commercialization, however, has affected the Indian and White sectors of the community of San Ignacio in different ways and has brought the two sectors into conflict. Ignacianos, whose consumer demands are on the rise, are confronted with an insufficiency of ways to acquire purchasing power and thus to meet those demands. This state of affairs results from the control to its economic advantage by the White sector of all area markets: the labor market, the market for the sale of consumer goods, and the market for the purchase of forest and agricultural products. Ignacianos, therefore, are always forced to "sell low and buy high."

## CHAPTER VIII AGRARIAN REFORM, POWER, AND STRESS

### Aftermath of the Revolution of 1952

The Revolution of 1952 and resulting agrarian reform were not met in San Ignacio with the violence and threats of violence reported for some of the highland areas. A representative of the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR), a political coalition of groups that made the revolution, arrived in San Ignacio from Trinidad in 1953 to organize the peasantry and initiate the reform process. Present in San Ignacio for about a month, the representative installed himself in the local police headquarters and from there summoned estate owners to appear before him with the ledger books in which were kept their worker accounts. Assisting the representative as auxiliaries in the task of summoning the patrones were Ignaciano veterans of the Chaco War. Fines were levied on the estate owners for accounting irregularities, and all worker debts, which in some cases had been substantially incurred by the parent of a worker and reached considerable sums, were declared officially null. The MNR representative also organized a local sindicato, or peasant union, which, as one old Ignaciano put it, was to make and work collectively a chaquerón, or large garden.

Oral histories yield strong evidence that after this auspicious start MNR party operatives and organizers in the San Ignacio area during the early years of the revolution were guided by personal economic interests rather than by ideological or party ones. Shortly after the departure of the first MNR representative, two brothers arrived in San Ignacio, one of whom had been appointed MNR jefe del comando ("chief of operations") for the San Ignacio area. The jefe is described today by Ignacianos who remember him as abusive in his treatment of the peasants, kicking them and administering lashes. The jefe was soon engaged in the commercial slaughter of beef and the milling of cane. Having purchased the then recently-built slaughtering facility at the large airstrip near San Ignacio, the man began to bring cattle from the area of Perú, a settlement on the River Apére to the north of San Ignacio, for slaughter and shipment by air to the highlands. According to one well-placed informant, both the slaughtering facility and the cattle were secured with government-issued coupons, which could be redeemed for agricultural tools and food items such as sugar and flour. The coupons, made possible in part by foreign assistance from the United States, were issued by the national government as an emergency measure to alleviate food shortages that followed the Agrarian Reform. The jefe was also accused of cattle rustling by local people.



The milling operation of the jefe was located near the slaughtering facility. Peasant labor for the enterprise was supplied largely by the first MNR corregidor, an Ignaciano veteran of the Chaco War. Workers were ill-treated and poorly paid; indeed, remuneration often consisted of no more than a receipt denoting the fulfillment of the traditional peasant corvée labor obligation known as prestación vial ("road service"). Some of the laborers complained of the conditions to the corregidor, and the subprefect, a local White, advised the corregidor to cease supplying the jefe with labor. In the course of events, both the corregidor and the subprefect complained of matters to the jefe, who in turn brought MNR departmental leaders to San Ignacio. The leaders promoted the MNR while there, especially the policies of Victor Paz Estenssoro, and soon dismissed from office both the subprefect and the Indian corregidor. Another local White was installed by party officials as the new subprefect, a man who was later alcalde ("mayor") of San Ignacio and who today has substantial holdings in both land and cattle. He is also a major rescatador of rice and a prominent speculator in land near San Ignacio which is controlled by the Alcaldía. Another Ignaciano was installed as corregidor, a man who was compadre to the local MNR jefe. It is the view of one informant that the jefe and his brother were in collusion with some of the old patrones and thus helped them procure labor.

It is also said that the brothers hoarded forested land in the area of the slaughtering facility and airstrip.

Early results of the Agrarian Reform were certainly less impressive in the San Ignacio area than in parts of the highlands. The local peasant union was very short-lived; a mesa directiva ("board of directors") was formed, and a local White was chosen as president. But the group never functioned and soon faded from the scene. It was certainly not supported by the local MNR jefe whose activities are discussed above. The reform did, both theoretically and actually, strike at the heart of local production arrangements by nullifying peasant debts and thus giving many workers a degree of independence unknown since the arrival of Whites in the area. One old patrón, however, estimates that about 20 percent of the workers chose to remain on the estates and ranches, where they were paid thereafter as day laborers.

With the advent of the Agrarian Reform and other events, the peasantry began to disperse to the outlying areas, and a sizeable contingent of Ignacianos went to Trinidad, where they settled in the barrio of San Antonio and made gardens in the low growth and alluvial soils of the floodplain of the Mamoré.<sup>1</sup> According to one older Ignaciano who emigrated to Trinidad, the exodus was prompted most immediately by the refusal of White ranchers in the town of San Ignacio to sell meat to anyone who approached their windows in Indian

attire (there was no municipal slaughtering facility then, and all meat was butchered and sold at a half-dozen or so homes belonging to White ranchers and estate owners). This, of course, was in retaliation for the departure of workers from the estates and ranches upon the legal severing of debt bonds.

Some of the old patrones with whom the writer talked argue that the Agrarian Reform, by abolishing the system of debt peonage, destroyed Beni agriculture and made the department a net importer of foodstuffs. They further look upon the now desperate plight of the Indian peasant as a further consequence of the Reform, and carefully note that the Indian is incapable of working, even for his own welfare, without the guidance of a patrón.

#### The Land-Tenure Structure

Whereas the Bolivian land-reform decree dates from August 2, 1953, and the new titling process began to distribute lands in the highland and valley areas immediately thereafter, only a negligible amount of land had been titled in the Beni by the MNR regime as late as 1956 (see Wilkie 1974: 41). According to Heath, the titling process was slow to get underway in the Beni because there was initially little competition for land and because there was a concern that titled lands might enter the tax rolls, an unstated objective of the reform decree (Heath et al. 1969: 354). Using data

from Wilkie (1974: 41), something of the rate of land titling in the Beni emerges if the cumulative surface area titled by Consejo Nacional de Reforma Agraria (CNRA) is expressed as a percentage of the area of the department (using the figure 21,356,400 hectares) for the following years:<sup>2</sup>

1956	0%	1975	19.0% <sup>3</sup>
1960	0.3%	1976	20.9%
1964	2.5%	1977	24.1%
1966	3.3%	1978	25.4%
1969	7.9%	1979	25.8%

By January 1, 1975, a total of 4,050,106.50 hectares of land had been distributed among 2,361 beneficiaries by CNRA in the Beni, a figure which represents 21.3 percent of the total land area distributed in the country by that date (Bolivia 1975: 3.89).

Of the lands titled by CNRA in the Beni through January 1, 1975, an area of 193,680.0 hectares, or about 4.9 percent of the surface area titled in the department, is classified as "cultivable area" (superficie cultivada). "Pasture lands" (superficie de pastoreo), by contrast, amount to 3,693,145.6 hectares and account for 93.3 percent of the surface area titled in the department (Bolivia 1975: 15-17).<sup>4</sup> The above area titled in cattle lands represents about 38.5 percent of the departmental surface area (=9,600,590 hectares, about 45 percent of the department) which is officially estimated to be apt for cattle ranching (see Bolivia 1975: 62).

Respecting Moxos Province, an area of 386,091.2 hectares, or 11.5 percent of the surface area of the province, had been distributed among 199 beneficiaries by January 1, 1975 (Bolivia 1975: 11;115). By January 1, 1979, 555,356.9 hectares, or 16.5 percent of the area of the province, had been distributed (calculations from data supplied the writer by CNRA, La Paz). Of the lands titled in the province by the close of 1974, only 1,237.9 hectares, or 0.3 percent of the titled area, are classed as "cultivable area." "Pastoral lands," on the other hand, amount to 374,708.9 hectares and account for 97.5 percent of the titled surface area of the province (Bolivia 1975, 54-56).

Ronald James Clark has analyzed the changing land-tenure structure in the Beni cattle regions through December 31, 1970. Table 1 portrays that structure as of December 31, 1970.

The data reveal that the greatest titled ranching surface area belongs to the category of cattle enterprises, while the greatest number of ranch properties fall either in the small or medium-size categories. Clark further calls attention to the "high rate of development and new settlement" which characterized the region throughout the decade of the 1960's, especially since 1968. This increased dynamism he attributes to a quadrupling of Bolivian beef prices over a five-year period and to increases in the number and amount of foreign loans to the Bolivian Agricultural Credit Bank for the development of a cattle industry (Clark 1974: 31-32). This dynamic of recent

Table 1. Beni Land-Tenure Structure as of December, 1970.

Location and Type of Property	No.	Percentage of Total of Properties	Total Area in Hectares	Percentage of Total of Hectares	Average Size in Hectares
Small Ranches <sup>5</sup>	366	35	161,012	6	439
Medium-Sized Ranches	492	48	996,002	39	2,024
Cattle Enterprises	180	17	1,408,377	55	7,824
Total Properties	1,038	100	2,565,391	100	
Cooperatives	1		5,212		
Without Classification	3		7,357		
					272

Source: Clark (1974: 20)

years is shown statistically in the following table,<sup>6</sup> where surface areas titled at the close of the indicated years are expressed as percentages of the total land area titled at the end of 1977:<sup>7</sup>

1960	64,069.2 has.	1.2%
1964	533,910.0 has.	10.4%
1966	704,761.2 has.	13.7%
1969	1,687,155.6 has.	32.8%
1975	4,057,716.0 has.	78.8%
1976	4,463,408.2 has.	86.7%
1977	5,146,892.4 has.	100.0%

Lands titled from the beginning of 1970 through 1977 account for 67.2 percent of all lands titled from the inception of the Agrarian Reform through 1977. But 46 percent, or just under half of all lands titled through 1977, were titled from 1970 through 1975.

The pattern noted above by Clark of a few cattle enterprises accounting for the majority of titled surface area continues for both the Beni and Moxes Province from January 1, 1975 through December 31, 1978. During this interval, 197 out of a total of 750 properties titled in the department were in areal extent 2,500 hectares (i.e., the lower threshold for cattle enterprises) or more.<sup>8</sup> The total area of such properties, 941,761.3 hectares, accounted for 64.3 percent of the surface area of all land titled in the department for the period. For

the same period, 26 of 95 properties titled for Moxos Province were at least 2,500 hectares in areal extent. And those 26 properties represented 95,770.6 hectares, or 56.6 percent of the surface area of all land titled in the province over the four-year period.<sup>9</sup> According to officials with Servicio Nacional de Reforma Agraria (SNRA) in Trinidad, there are still (as of 1979) baldíos, or public lands, apt for ranching available in the provinces of Moxos, Mamoré, Iténez, and Marbán. None are now available, however, in Cercado.<sup>10</sup> Knowledgeable people in San Ignacio, though, claim that all lands fit for ranching in Moxos Province are now owned and titled and that ranch land can be had only through purchase from private individuals.

Those peasants, or small farmers, with titled land in the Beni are few. As has already been shown, only 4.9 percent of the titled land in the department at January 1, 1975 was classed as "cultivable." Likewise, the corresponding figure for Moxos Province was 0.3 percent. Only two peasant settlements--Retiro and Argentina--among those dependent on San Ignacio had titled lands at the time this research was conducted. According to officials of SNRA in Trinidad, solicitations for titles from four other settlements--Achanaguere, Bermeo, Fátima, and Pueblo Nuevo--were in process at late 1978.

The disposition of all land within a six-kilometer radius of the plaza of San Ignacio is controlled by the Alcaldía of the town, an arrangement approved by the national government



as a means of providing municipal revenues. Accordingly, the Alcaldía is charged with selling and titling lots within the radius as well as levying property taxes on titled lands, though both sale price and tax rates are subject to review by the national government.

The municipal land of San Ignacio is divided broadly into two zones, the Urban Radius (radio urbano) and the Suburban Radius (radio suburbano).<sup>11</sup> The town proper lies within the Urban Radius, which includes all land within a radius of one kilometer of the town plaza. This area is further divided into ten Series ("A" through "J", moving away from the plaza) for sale and tax purposes. The sale price charged by the Alcaldía for such land declines from 3.00 pesos per square meter in Series "A" (nearest the plaza) to 0.10 pesos per square meter in Series "J." Downward adjustments of between 10 and 20 percent can be made in the municipal sale price of lands that are flood-prone upon recommendation of the municipal topographer. Property taxes are levied against urban lands at the rate of 4.00 pesos for each 1,000 pesos of assessed valuation.<sup>12</sup> Further, a tax surcharge is levied on street-front properties which have no buildings. In Series "A," for example, the surcharge is levied at the rate of 15.00 pesos per running meter that fronts the street. The surcharge rate declines as the distance of properties from the plaza increases.

The Suburban Radius includes all land outside of the Urban Radius but within a radius of six kilometers of the town plaza. This area is further divided into five concentric bands, each of one-kilometer width. Municipal sale prices within this suburban zone begin at 300 pesos per hectare for lands in the first kilometer (or band nearest the plaza) and decrease in steps of 50 pesos per hectare for each successive band. As with urban lands, downward price adjustments of between 10 and 30 percent can be made for lands that are flood-prone upon recommendation of the municipal topographer. Suburban lands are taxed by the Alcaldía at the rate of 3.00 pesos for each 1,000 pesos of assessed valuation.<sup>13</sup>

Data from the cadastral registers for both municipal zones are too uneven, too disorganized, and too incomplete to provide a reliable picture of the tenure structure at any point in time since 1952. A perusal of entries in the register as well as queries of numerous individuals, however, suggest that few peasants own land and hold title in either zone.

#### Land Tenure and Agrarian Reform in Review

Prior to the Revolution of 1952, few landholders in the Beni region possessed titles to their lands. Population was sparse, land was plentiful relative to the demand for it, and the principle of "right through possession" (derecho a posesión) governed land tenure in the region. This principle continued

to be viable even after the advent of agrarian reform in 1953. As has been shown, as late as 1960 only 0.3 percent of the surface area of the Beni had been titled. Such a delayed change in the tenure pattern reflects in part the lack of a sense of urgency for change on the part of either the peasant masses or local MNR leaders. In this regard, the Beni contrasts sharply with the highland and valley regions, where the tenure structure changed much more rapidly. In the Beni, however, land has traditionally been abundant whereas labor has been scarce. It must also be recalled that the initial rise in the price of beef that aroused the prospect of quick wealth was seen by many local people in the 1950's as a temporary phenomenon. The logical response, therefore, was to quickly round up and slaughter as many cattle as possible, not to title land with a view to establishing a cattle industry viable over the long term. By the latter part of the decade of the 1960's, however, a land rush was underway in response to the continued high commercial value of cattle and the incipient and projected construction of highways that promised to further open the region to settlement and trade.

Although the land rush increased the tempo of the titling process, that process has overwhelmingly favored ranchers and speculators to the virtually total neglect of peasants. Ignacianos claim that the forested lands just to the north of the highway to Trinidad are now mostly titled to Whites, who deny

them access. Many of the best lands near San Ignacio, especially those in the suburban zone controlled by the Alcaldía, are also titled to Whites. Speculation in municipal lands is rampant. Quite fortuitously, the writer encountered a gentleman in La Paz who had purchased from a bank as investment an area of forested land near the abattoir landing strip of San Ignacio. As with lands along the highway and elsewhere, White owners frequently deny Ignacianos access to such properties to make gardens. Such owners occasionally publish bans via local radio forbidding the cutting of trees on their properties.

The acquisition by Whites of land in the Suburban Radius from the Alcaláia has occasioned conflict between the two sectors of the community, for on such land Ignacianos have planted cacao and coffee groves. While a few Whites with title to such grove lands continue to grant the traditional owners harvest rights over the trees, many deny Ignacianos those rights. One Ignaciano who acquired title to suburban lands on which a few cacao and coffee trees were growing, by contrast, paid the traditional owner, another Ignaciano, for each tree over a period of time. In a more general way, such conflicts also reflect differing conceptions of land tenure. For Ignacianos, ownership of forest "land" is restricted to the period during which gardens or groves are being harvested. For Whites, on the other hand, the tenure conception is more comprehensive, for it includes the right to both natural and planted vegetation

and is not restricted to the period during which such vegetation is under exploitation. Further, the White conception gives the owner rights to near-absolute disposition and use of the land. Numerous Ignacianos told the writer that they could not understand why local Whites with titled forest lands would not permit trees to be felled on those lands.

The sale and tax structures of land controlled by the Alcaldía definitely have a dispersive effect on Ignacianos. One official of the Alcaldía justifies the structuring on the grounds that they provide municipal revenues for public works as well as guarantee municipal control of lands nearby, thus assuring the existence of pasture areas (potreros) to work in conjunction with the local abattoir.<sup>14</sup> Many Ignacianos, however, for want of resources with which to purchase lands and meet tax liabilities, have been forced to locate and work outside of the six-kilometer municipal radius. A municipal official told the writer that the peasants are given special consideration by the Alcaldía in matters of land purchase and payment of taxes. Many Ignacianos, on the other hand, say that when they seek to purchase municipal lands they are often told that they do not need titles since the lands belong to them anyway, and therefore to go ahead and work them. Peasants are also reminded that they could not meet the tax liability should they possess title. It is the case that many Ignacianos, especially those with properties within the urban radius, are delinquent in the payment of municipal taxes.

While such delinquency is often tolerated and does not always eventuate in the loss of title, it is within the power of the Alcaldía to force the sale of such properties in order to pay the tax. Numerous Ignacianos have been forced to sell their delinquent properties to Whites, who bribe or otherwise pressure municipal officials to force the sale of such properties. In summary, then, the control of lands in and around San Ignacio by the Alcaldía in an economic ambience of rapidly rising land values and rampant speculation has worked to undermine a once secure land base for Ignacianos, thus further contributing to the post-1950 dispersion.

Further analysis of the design and implementation of the Agrarian Reform in the area is revealing. As Heath well notes, the nature of land tenure and use in the Beni was unknown (as it is today among many government officials) to the drafters of the Agrarian Reform law, which was written with the conditions of the densely populated highland and valley regions of the western part of the country in mind (Heath et al., 1969: 30-31; 350-51). The law certainly does not recognize the differential land-use patterns of ranchers and peasant farmers, and virtually no adequate provisions exist to guarantee a land base to the latter. Neither does the law adequately provide for the ranching sector. The theoretical five-hectares-per-head rule for granting ranch lands effectively puts a ceiling on herd size and fails to recognize that cattle diseases often diminish herd numbers over the short term.

Many deficiencies of the National Agrarian Reform Service (SNRA) in the Beni are directly related to the agency's scarce operating resources. While SNRA today occupies a small office in Trinidad, Heath reports that the Service had no office space in the Beni in the late 1960's and that agrarian judges in Trinidad worked out of their homes.<sup>15</sup> And there was not even a copy of the text of the Agrarian Reform law in Riberalta (Heath et al., 1969: 54-55). The costs of transporting, feeding, and lodging an agrarian commission,<sup>16</sup> which surveys the solicited land and initiates the lengthy bureaucratic titling process, must be borne by the solicitant. Since these commissions generally make at least part of the trip by small plane, transportation costs alone are usually well beyond the reach of peasants. Nevertheless, no resources are budgeted by SNRA in the Beni for the titling of peasant lands.

Other problems also are at least partially attributable to the inadequate financing of SNRA and the low salaries of its officials. It is axiomatic in the Beni that topographers and agrarian judges favor those solicitants who pay the most lucrative bribes. Accordingly, irregularities in the titling process are common. There are cases of double titling of a single property, of the papers of one solicitant being "lost" by officials so that title can be granted to a later petitioner, and of the actual area of a property exceeding the legal limit and area stated in the papers. Such a system, needless to say,

does not protect the peasant but rather favors the land speculator and large rancher.

Sundry other problems also beset SNRA in the Beni. In contrast to the early years of the Agrarian Reform, when agrarian judges were required to be licensed lawyers, many judges today have virtually no legal training and do not have an adequate knowledge of the Agrarian Reform law. More generally, a lack of trained personnel results in poor land surveys and a host of errors and delays throughout the titling process. The physical rigors of the Beni have led some topographers to survey properties using only the compass of a small plane. Irregularities in the titling process, arising from both errors and widespread chicane and bribery, have been the cause of much violence in the Beni in recent years. Two ranchers entered the SNRA office in Trinidad during one of the writer's visits, complaining that a third rancher had produced a land title with topographical map which included portions of the properties of both men, who also had titles and maps. The ranchers told the agrarian judge that if he did not take action soon to resolve the problem that there would be violence and that SNRA would be responsible.

Peasants in the Beni have hardly fared better under the Agrarian Reform with respect to labor legislation and working conditions. Although the National Federation of Peasant Workers is a creation of the Reform, the Federation has done little for the Beni peasant. Officials at the departmental, provincial



and local levels are appointed from "above," typically with little or no consultation with peasant constituencies. Few Ignacianos knew who the delegado campesino ("peasant delegate") was (and for a time there was not one) for Moxos Province, and the occasional representative of the Federation in the outlying settlements maintains a very low profile. There is, therefore, much abuse of peasants in the area that goes unchecked for want of official intervention. Ronald Clark observes that many ranchers will not enter written contractual agreements with workers for terms in excess of three months in order to avoid legally-prescribed social benefits should workers be fired or choose to leave. Workers, on the other hand, forego such contracts in order to be assured of work. Most labor legislation, notes Clark, especially that dealing with medical and severance-pay benefits, has not been implemented in the lowland cattle regions (Clark 1974: 24-25).

Part of the Agrarian Reform also was the policy of installing rural schools to provide formal education to the peasant masses. The results in the area of San Ignacio, it must be said, have been marked. In contrast to pre-1952 times, the numerous rural schools scattered over the outlying settlements provide Ignacianos nowadays with the basic skills of literacy. The language of instruction is Spanish, so that the schools have contributed significantly to the spread of Spanish among Ignacianos. In San Ignacio proper, at least,

the school provides a setting for sustained contact between Indian and White children. All of this, it can be reasonably argued, has widened the intellectual horizons of Ignacianos as well as modified aspirational patterns. Older Ignacianos, most of whom strongly desire formal education for their children and grandchildren, complain at the same time that the youth of today no longer respect traditional cultural practices but want instead to live like Whites. Any many younger Ignacianos search eagerly for salaried and non-agricultural jobs.

To summarize, then, the Agrarian Reform has neither provided land for peasants nor improved the working and living conditions of rural dwellers. Indeed, such conditions seem in some ways to have actually deteriorated. Many older Ignacianos, for example, readily admit that food was more abundant and more easily secured before 1950 than it is today. What William McEwen concludes respecting peasant indebtedness from a study of the Reyes area also applies to the San Ignacio area. Although debt peonage has been illegal since 1953, he writes, it still persists in the area. Moreover, local authorities are inclined to support the rancher when he complains, and thus require that workers cancel their debts through personal labor (McEwen 1975: 90).

#### The Locus of Power

The course of agrarian reform in San Ignacio and the Beni in general cannot be well understood without some consideration

of local, regional, and national power relations. Both the Alcaldía and the Subprefecture are currently controlled by the patrones, or large cattle ranchers. Further, these patrones belong to the same families that dominated the local political and economic scene prior to 1952. Ranchers furnish the local unit of the Mounted Police with foodstuffs, while the agrarian judge for Moxos Province is the "first cousin" of the departmental head of the Peasant Federation. The way in which these power relations work to serve the interests of the ranching sector through manipulation and dominance of the peasant sector emerged quite clearly in the course of events leading up to and including the national presidential elections in 1978. This was the first presidential election in Bolivia since the Banzer coup of 1971. The military candidate was air-force general Juan Pereda Asbún, who was selected by air-force general and incumbent president, Hugo Banzer Suárez.

Some months prior to the elections in July of 1978--apparently when the Banzer Government saw itself obliged, because of foreign and domestic pressures, to open the country to elections--the civilian prefect of the Beni was replaced by a large rancher and retired air-force officer, who in turn named a new subprefect for Moxos Province. The latter, a large rancher and resident of San Ignacio, was a brother-in-law to the mayor of the town, a woman with extensive ranch holdings acquired through both inheritance and marriage.

About a month before the elections, a unit of military police arrived in San Ignacio, where the police function was already exercised by troops of the Mounted Police, a division of the National Guard found only in the lowland cattle regions. Also, an inspector from Division of Criminal Investigations (DIC) had only recently been posted to the town. Further, a week or so in advance of election day a contingent of forty combat-ready troops arrived, ostensibly to maintain order during the elections. Such heavy security may in part have reflected long-standing fears on the part of the local power structure. It was generally known that the mayor had often asked the government for more police to counter a perceived threat from the Communists. One Communist leader, who was caught up along with other local individuals in a national dragnet and taken to the detention center of Camiri shortly after the Banzer coup in 1971, was told by local Pereda campaign forces well in advance of the elections that he need not engage in politics since the Banzer regime (the policies of which Pereda would continue) had brought stability and prosperity to the region. Probably wisely, the man did not campaign.

On the day before elections, Pereda forces brought peasants by truck to San Ignacio from designated gathering points along the highway. Quartered for the night in three locations--the Subprefecture, the Alcaldía, and the Belén (meeting place of the Cabildo)--, the peasants were fed amply with fresh

beef and given cane alcohol, all provided by Pereda forces. Before they retired for the evening, Pereda organizers, ever present and mingling with the peasants in the quartering areas, distributed the green ballots of the Pereda coalition. Some of the Pereda organizers spent the night with the peasants, and sentries were posted at the doors of the quarters. There was, therefore, no last-minute campaigning by the opposition. The peasants were awakened at dawn and given instructions on the procedures for voting. Green ballots were again distributed as the charges were given breakfast before being taken to the voting tables. Of the 1,749 votes cast in San Ignacio proper, 1,497 (= 85.6%) were for the military candidate, Juan Pereda.<sup>17</sup>

The final country count gave Pereda a resounding victory, but foreign and domestic pressures subsequently forced the national electoral commission to annul the results when charges of massive fraud were substantiated by international observers. Denied his electoral victory, Pereda shortly thereafter took control of the government through a coup d'état. His regime was short-lived, for an army general soon ousted Pereda and took charge of the government, justifying the move on the grounds of impending civil strife and a rapidly deteriorating economy. Again national elections were announced for July of 1979. In early March of that year, just before the writer left San Ignacio, both the head of the Peasant Federation and the agrarian

judge for Moxos Province (again, these men are "first cousins") arrived in San Ignacio to rally the peasants and prompt them to proclaim their support for Banzer (whose candidacy had only theretofore been rumored) in the upcoming elections.

The use of power by the ranching sector was manifested in yet other ways during the 1978 electoral process. Emerging as political spokesman for the peasant sector of San Ignacio, for example, was a local rancher who also owned the town radio station. At political assemblies organized by Pereda forces in San Ignacio, the spokesman declared the local peasantry as solidly in support of Pereda. The assemblies were held in a large courtyard at the house of the cacique of the Cabildo; Cabildo officials were employed freely by Pereda forces to rally local peasants. Cane alcohol was liberally served at the assemblies. Even the military was politically active. A young naval commander of the local military police unit campaigned actively on behalf of Pereda. And according to one informed source close to the command structure of the soldiers sent to guarantee order during the elections, each such troop contingent dispatched to the Beni towns included local native sons loyal to Pereda. It may, therefore, have been more than coincidental that the son of the local electoral judge, himself a large rancher and kinsman of both the sub-prefect and the mayor, was among the soldiers on election patrol in San Ignacio.

Messianism

The progressive loss of access to vital resources such as land, cattle, and wild game associated with the encroachments of Whites since the Chaco War has caused considerable stress among Ignacianos. It is in the context of tensions associated with such social change, which has been rapid since the 1950's, that a regional messianic movement must be placed. Involving a quest for a so-called Loma Santa ("Sacred Mount"), the movement has commanded the allegiance of all of the native pampean groups as well as groups from northern Santa Cruz Department. According to Riester, highland peasant colonists of the montane zone (montaña) of both La Paz and Beni departments have also subscribed to the beliefs of the movement since about 1965 (Riester 1976: 311).

According to Ignacianos, the fabulous place is located well to the west or southwest of San Ignacio. Some say that it must be along the upper River Cubereni, an uninhabited area where virgin forest and wild game are still abundant. Resources important to the traditional lifestyle and livelihood of Ignacianos are held to abound at the Loma Santa. Both cattle and wild game are plentiful, there is an abundance of high ground and virgin forest for gardens, and an ample supply of good water is ever available. Some Ignacianos say that ready-made clothes and other such necessities will also await them there. Further, the Loma Santa is ruled by a priest and guarded

by angels; San Miguel is frequently mentioned. Erected at the site is a tall cross on which "San Ignacio," or sometimes "Loma Santa," is inscribed. And the place is held to be entirely surrounded by yomomo, or swamp, where a large snake-like beast lives which will devour any White who attempts to enter.

The origins of the current movement seem to go back to the Rubber Boom, when Andrés Guachoco led a group of Trinitarios in rebellion against White oppression in 1887 (see history chapter). Jürgen Riester, however, observes that there is information about a similar movement dating from the first years of the Jesuit period, a movement with typical Guaraní elements (Riester 1976: 312-13). Older Ignacianos recall from childhood that the Loma Santa was discussed by their parents and that families or small groups would occasionally strike out in search of it. Organized quests for the fabulous place by the masses, however, have been few. About 200 men, Ignacianos and Trinitarios, banded together to search for it in the late 1940's, a quest which ultimately led to the founding of an upriver settlement which was christened "Pueblo Nuevo" ("New Town") in about 1951. According to the Ignaciano leader of the quest and founder of Pueblo Nuevo, the idea--which the settlement name suggests--was that Ignacianos (and those Trinitarios who so desired) would leave San Ignacio for the new settlement. And a few did drift upriver to Pueblo Nuevo once the Agrarian



Reform severed the bonds of debt peonage. The largest native exodus within memory from San Ignacio in search of the Loma Santa, however, occurred in 1959 when a Guarayu Indian (a Tupí speaker) who was married to an Ignaciana led most of the native sector of the town in a quest that lasted for three months. He led the group to the southwest and into the lower forested reaches of Cochabamba Department.

Led by the Guarayu, who preached that San Ignacio would soon be destroyed by water and fire, men, women, and children left the town in three waves, always at night in order not to arouse the suspicions of authorities and local Whites. The Guarayu laid down a set of rules to govern his followers in their quest. Only those individuals of legitimate birth and those married in the Church could enter the Loma Santa; and all those entering had to be dressed in traditional white, the women in tipoy and men in camijeta. Importantly, the Guarayu also told his followers to bring all items of personal adornment such as rings, necklaces, and ear pendants. The Guarayu further instructed that no necessities be included, and that food sufficient only for a few days march be taken along. Necessities and food were to be found in abundance at the Loma Santa. Ignacianos were even told that their houses, cane presses, animals, and other belongings would be conveyed to the Loma Santa by the Holy Spirit, where they would reappear. Accordingly, those individuals who left abandoned everything--houses, animals, and gardens--and made no provisions to return

to San Ignacio. It was thus that Ignacianos left San Ignacio, travelling in small groups and carrying their household saints and lighted candles. Interspersed among them were rezadores ("prayers"), who periodically led the groups in prayer during the march.

The sojourners went first to Pueblo Nuevo, which was to serve as a staging ground for the final trek southwestward to the Loma Santa. There, Ignacianos met with Trinitarios from San Lorenzo and San Francisco, who had also been brought by the Guarayu leader. Reports suggest an intensification of prayer ritual in Pueblo Nuevo. A priest was soon summoned from San Ignacio to administer the sacraments, especially marriage, to a large number of people. It seems that the young priest, only recently arrived in San Ignacio, was unaware of why people were gathered in Pueblo Nuevo. He married without qualms numerous couples.

After wandering for a time in virgin forest, the Guarayu told his followers that they were near the Loma Santa and would soon enter. First, however, they had to deposit their items of personal adornment in a spot designated by him, then gather at another designated location whence they would enter the sacred land. The Guarayu, after ordering the others to wait for him, returned to where the adornments were cached, loaded them into his canoe and absconded.

When the Guarayu did not return, his followers began to wander in the forest in search of the sacred realm. The meager

provisions brought for the journey were depleted. Hunger, therefore, soon beset the questers, who struggled to survive on palm cabbage and wild fruits as best they could. Numerous children died. One group of wanderers was provided with food-stuffs by Chiman Indians in the area of the long-abandoned Jesuit mission town of San José to the west of Carmen del Cabito.

Disillusioned and weak, the searchers abandoned the pursuit after nearly three months. Many Ignacianos, some of them ashamed to return to San Ignacio to face those who did not go as well as local Whites, remained and populated the upriver areas. Many residents today of Carmen del Cabito, Pueblo Nuevo, and Santa Rosa del Apére were among those who sought the Loma Santa in 1959. Those who did return to San Ignacio often found that their gardens had been harvested, that their animals had either wandered off or been stolen, and that their houses and household items had been plundered.

Despite the fiasco of 1959, belief in the Loma Santa and that it will one day be found remains common among Ignacianos and Trinitarios. Even today a hunter may return from the forest to report hearing in the night the lowing of cattle from the Loma Santa. But when he reconnoitered the area at dawn, he found only pampa and forest. He insists, no less, that the lowing cattle were from the Loma Santa, and concludes that the sacred place is enchanted and that God is not yet ready to reveal it to Ignacianos.

The strength of the belief in the Loma Santa was revealed to the writer in early 1978, when a large number of Ignacianos were again on the brink of leaving the town for the sacred place. It was rumored that Isidoro, eponymous founder of the local lake and now an old man, wished to leave his watery home. An important part of the rumor was that the waters of the lake would then rise and flood the town on January 1, after which fire would rain from above. To escape destruction, Ignacianos were to take refuge at the Loma Santa. Another mass exodus was probably narrowly averted when the corregidor and cacique learned of the rumor and impending departure, and responded by convening a meeting in the Belén to dissuade any would-be pilgrims.

The source of the rumor, apparently, was a local rancher and land speculator who told an old Ignaciano that he had recently talked with Isidoro, who told him to relate the above to Ignacianos. It was the opinion of some local people, both Indian and White, that the rancher's motive for the rumor was to seize Indian properties once the owners left San Ignacio.

It is the thesis of the writer that the Loma Santa movement is an important manifestation of the stress which Ignacianos and other native groups are currently experiencing. Such stress has been caused by the progressive and sustained encroachment of Whites since the Rubber Boom, an encroachment which has intensified since the Chaco War. The encroachment has resulted in the alienation of strategic resources, or of access

thereto, from the native sector. Ignacianos must today cope with a scarcity of good garden lands and food supplies, especially meat.

Belief in and pursuit of the Loma Santa, then, represents an attempt to relieve the stress of deprivation through escape to a "promised land." Although belief in a similar place may antedate the mission period among some groups in the area, the elements of the contemporary movement are directly out of the Jesuit era. Indeed, the Loma Santa might well be viewed as a Jesuit mission. Just as the movement is a mark of stress precipitated by White encroachment, descriptions of the Loma Santa are invariably descriptions of a time prior to White settlement in the area.

Notes to Chapter VIII

<sup>1</sup>Many of those Ignacianos who emigrated to Trinidad at this time and thereafter began to return to the home area in the mid-1970's, after a series of heavy floods destroyed their gardens along the Mamoré and made refugees of them.

<sup>2</sup>Ronald James Clark argues that most private land held in the Beni at the close of 1971 had not been secured through titles issued by Servicio Nacional de Reforma Agraria (Clark 1974: 19). The figures to follow, therefore, as well as all other official statistics used in this section, would obviously not include such traditional holdings.

<sup>3</sup>Percentages from 1975 to 1979 were calculated by the writer, using statistics kindly provided him by Departamento de Estadística, Consejo Nacional de Reforma Agraria, La Paz.

<sup>4</sup>The percentages here are of "titled" lands, not of "distributed" lands as above. In official statistics, the latter figure exceeds the former since it generally includes superficie revertida, or land that has reverted to the State. The difference between the two figures in the Beni for cumulative data at January 1, 1975, however, is only 93,156 hectares (see Bolivia 1975: 15-17). Also, the system and criteria by which land is classified as "cultivable" or "pasture" are not clear.

<sup>5</sup>In accordance with the Agrarian Reform property classification for cattle ranches, small ranches are under 500 hectares, medium-sized ranches are from 500 to 2,500 hectares, and cattle enterprises are from 2,500 to 50,000 hectares. The legal ceiling for ranch properties is 50,000 hectares. Further, land is theoretically assigned at the rate of five hectares to the head of cattle, a regulation which puts a ceiling on herd size.

<sup>6</sup>The figures may also reflect to a degree a greater efficiency resulting from the creation of "mobile brigades," or teams of officials from Servicio Nacional de Reforma Agraria, which moved about the countryside, thus making the titling machinery more accessible in the remoter areas. Such brigades were in operation from 1971 until 1976.

<sup>7</sup>Calculations for the table employ data from Wilkie (1974: 41), CNRA (Bolivia 1975: 15-17), and figures provided the writer by CNRA, La Paz.

<sup>8</sup>Only properties which figure in the count, one 1,321.3 hectares in extent and the other 2,699.9 hectares, are classed as "collective." Both were titled in Ballivian Province in 1975.

<sup>9</sup>Calculations made from data supplied the writer by CNRA, La Paz.

<sup>10</sup>At the time this research was conducted, SNRA did not possess a mosaic map of the area whereby titled lands could be distinguished from public ones at a glance. The writer was told by SNRA officials in Trinidad that such a map was currently being made by the Instituto Geográfico Militar in La Paz.

<sup>11</sup>According to one local municipal official, the Alcaldía has controlled all lands within a radius of one league of the plaza since before 1950. A review of the cadastral register (which seems to be highly incomplete) for the Suburban Radius reveals one lot that was sold by the Alcaldía as early as 1941. Property taxes were not levied on lands within the suburban zone until about 1973, however.

<sup>12</sup>The assessed values of urban properties currently bear little relation to the official municipal sale values of the land, which were established in 1973. And even the assessed values are usually considerably below true market values. The municipal cadastral register reveals, for example, that a lot of 720 square meters on the plaza (i.e., Series "A") had an assessed value in 1978 of 30,000 pesos. The official sale value of the lot, by contrast, would be only 2,160 pesos.

<sup>13</sup>The price structure of municipal lands described above dates from 1973 and represents the revision of a structure set forth by municipal ordinance in 1969. The revision, which was both initiated by the Alcaldía of San Ignacio and approved by the Ministry of the Interior in 1973, was intended to reflect the rapid rise in land values during the intervening years. The opening words of the ministerial resolution seek to rationalize the revision:

That, the prices set forth by the municipal ordinance of 1969 are totally unrealistic and not in accordance with the real value of the land, the more so if one considers that the Trinidad-San Ignacio-Oromono-Cochabamba highway is currently under construction and drawing near to the town of San Ignacio de Moxos (Bolivia 1973; my translation).

This ministerial resolution and the described tax structure for municipal lands were further confirmed specifically for San Ignacio by the national government through a supreme decree signed by President Hugo Banzer Suárez in 1976 (see Bolivia 1976).

14 Many if not most of these lands, however, are owned by a single individual who has converted forest areas into fenced grazing zones. The particular individual, a local MNR leader in the 1950's and 1960's and former mayor of San Ignacio, is one of the leading local land speculators.

15 The agrarian judge for Moxos Province lives in Trinidad, not in the provincial capital of San Ignacio, and has a desk in the SNRA office there.

16 Such a commission consists of a topographer, an agrarian judge, a secretary, a representative of the departmental Peasant Federation, and sometimes other assistant personnel.

17 These figures are unofficial ones provided the writer by a local election functionary and represent votes cast at the six tables in San Ignacio only. Results from Fátima, a polling place on the highway between San Ignacio and Trinidad, are not included. The San Ignacio vote is further broken down by coalition and party as follows:

UNP (Pereda, the military candidate): 1,497

MNR: 162

FUDP: 42

FRI: 5

Blanks (i.e., no ballot enclosed in envelope): 20

Null votes (i.e., those improperly cast): 23



## CHAPTER IX SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### The Current Situation of Ignacianos and its Origins

Since about 1950, Ignacianos have progressively dispersed, so that today they are found mainly in twenty-eight named settlements or settled areas including San Ignacio, as well as on numerous cattle ranches, where they work as laborers. This dispersion is most directly the result of three interrelated and dynamic factors which have operated conjointly since the late 1940's: the quest for wild game for both meat and hides; the changing land-tenure structure; and the competition for land use between peasants and ranchers. These factors are strategic for the role they play in determining access by Ignacianos to vital resources and thus defining the socio-economic situation and life chances of the Indians. For Ignacianos they are now in the way of anticipated conditions of life, of obstacles which must be worked around in order to survive.

It is, then, to the aforementioned strategic factors as well as to others that derive from them that Ignacianos must adjust. The factors impinge directly upon the choice of sites for settlement. Not only must a peasant farmer locate at a flood-free site with ample high-growth forest for gardens, but he must also have at least usufruct rights over the land

as well as be free from the menace of foraging cattle entering his gardens. And he might also wish to locate in an area where wild game is accessible since meat is now scarce and the sale of hides affords income with which to procure necessities for his family. If the farmer has children of school age, he will want also to be near one of the rural schools. It may be advantageous as well to locate near a ranch in order to obtain extra income through seasonal or part-time labor, or to obtain dairy products through occasional exchange with ranch personnel. Those Ignacianos active in the Cabildo or one of the other religious groups in San Ignacio must live near the town in order to perform their duties. Living far from San Ignacio also poses transportation hardships. Few Ignacianos have oxen and agricultural produce must be moved by foot on carrying poles. The constant availability of water, the whereabouts of important family members, and a keen dislike of Whites are other variables that often influence settlement decisions. Ignacianos, then, are forever weighing the above factors, which are themselves fluid, in order to make settlement decisions that represent tolerable if not always comfortable compromises.

Such a compromise was made by one peasant known to the writer who is currently settled in a forested area to the northwest of San Ignacio, just across Lake Isidoro, where there is ample forest available for gardens and where some

game is still to be found. There is no school in the area, however, so that he must leave his children in San Ignacio, where his wife remains to care for them. The man remains at the garden during the week, where he lives alone and cooks for himself. He must, however, carry foodstuffs to his family in town every weekend. Such foodstuffs include wild meat, which the man hunts in forests further to the northwest, sometimes spending three days out before returning to his garden. Such a regimen, not unusual among Ignacianos today, makes herioc demands on this man's time and energies, but the regimen rests upon his decision to settle in the particular area, a decision which represents a compromise based on the assessment and balancing of the factors discussed above.

The decision made by some Ignacianos to settle and work on cattle ranches is also based on a consideration of the above factors, and may well represent a marginally optimal balancing of them in order to maximize life chances. The food quest is less chancy for those ranch workers who receive a monthly ration, and necessities can usually be obtained on account from the patrón. Those Ignacianos who decide to work cattle on a shares basis (al partido)--and many seek such an arrangement--may also be optimally balancing the factors. The owner of the capital herd typically stands in the relation of patrón to Ignacianos, so that necessities,

sometimes even food, can be obtained from him on credit to be repaid by increases in the herd. Young people today want to work with cattle and have patrones. Older Ignacianos frequently note this desire for a patrón, a desire that seems to be based on a careful balancing of those same factors. It certainly is the case today that the material needs of a family can hardly be met through agriculture alone. Articulation with the overwhelmingly dominant White sector as a ranch laborer is simply the most viable adjustment to contemporary socio-economic conditions.

If working as a ranch laborer represents a decision to articulate "closely" with the White sector, then searching for the Loma Santa represents a decision to isolate and divorce oneself totally from that sector. The decision to search for and settle at the Loma Santa, then, represents no less than that of settling on a ranch a balancing of the strategic and derivative factors in an effort to achieve a viable adjustment to conditions.

Such decisions, however, often do not lead to permanent settlement at a site, for all evidence points to considerable geographical and occupational mobility among Ignacianos, a mobility which relates in part to the fluidity of the determinant socio-economic factors. Thus, game supplies may dwindle in a particular zone and a once abundant high forest can be gradually reduced to fallow. The installment of a ranch nearby brings cattle which invade peasant gardens, while

a tract of public land can suddenly be titled to a White who evicts any previous peasant occupants. Accordingly, any given peasant may cultivate a subsistence garden in one zone for a while, then pursue pelts for a time in another, then work for a year as a ranch laborer, and lastly strike out in search of the Loma Santa before once again returning to subsistence cultivation. Ignacianos often say that they make such moves in search of suerte, or good fortune; but suerte can also be viewed as an optimal combination of the strategic and derivative factors. That such an optimal combination cannot be more than marginally achieved by Ignacianos in the current socio-economic environment would account for such geographical and occupational mobility.

The current dilemma of Ignacianos described above can be best understood in the light of events of recent history. Foremost of those is the commercialization of beef cattle, an ongoing process which got underway in the late 1940's. While oral histories suggest that Whites began to acquire cattle from Indians soon upon arriving in San Ignacio just before the turn of the last century, the process of acquisition hastened dramatically once cattle assumed commercial value. And land values rose accordingly, so that by the close of the 1960's, with the beckoning prospect of highways to further open the region, a land rush was underway.

The commercialization of wild pelts and hides, a process which has paralleled the commercialization of beef cattle,

also brought profound consequences for Ignacianos. This is so because the progressive, and in recent times rapid, loss by Ignacianos of access to beef and dairy products has in the same measure created a progressive dependence on wild game for food. But supplies of wild game throughout the region are rapidly dwindling; the human assault on both the collared and white-lipped peccary, for example, is two-fold, for they serve as food as well as provide hides for exchange.

The Chaco War must be seen as background to the twin processes of commercialization. There was a certain restlessness among those Ignacianos who returned from the war, and estate and ranch owners talk of the recalcitrance of labor. It is probably no coincidence that a prominent Ignaciano leader of the search for the Loma Santa in the late 1940's was a veteran of the Chaco campaign. Evidence is that returning veterans were less disposed to accept the old order, and were therefore casting about boldly for alternatives. For some, the Revolution of 1952 and the Agrarian Reform seemed, at least initially, to offer such an alternative.

The Agrarian Reform is certainly critical to any assessment of the impact of beef commercialization on Ignacianos and other peasants of the region. In the Beni the Reform had to operate in the face of a land rush. Beyond the initial severing of the bonds of debt peonage, which gave many peasants

a new sense and measure of freedom, the Reform has done little for the peasant masses. The Reform has overwhelmingly served the interests of the dominant ranching sector to the virtual exclusion of the peasant, who has not been guaranteed access to a viable resource base in land. Neither has the Reform been concerned for the welfare of peasant labor; the Beni Federation of Peasants has been controlled since at least 1971 by the ranching sector allied with the Banzer military government. Put succinctly, the Beni peasant has been without power to intervene in the socio-economic forces of the past twenty-five years in order to guide them in a direction more favorable to him.

Contributing also to the press on local resources brought about by post-1940 changes has been an apparent increase in the Ignaciano population over the period. According to informants, Ignacianos are now both more numerous and more dispersed. Drawing on statistics previously presented in this work, a priest in San Ignacio reported in about 1930 the Indian population of the community to be 2,580, a figure that presumably includes those Ignacianos working on nearby sugar estates and ranches. Ignacianos in that year accounted for 50.8 percent of the population of the community. Using an estimated figure of 6,000 Ignacianos in 1976 and assuming 65 percent of the

official population (3,000, per 1976 Census) of the town proper to be Ignaciano, the conclusion is that Ignacianos make up about 85.1 percent of the population belonging to the community (including the satellite settlements). The Ignaciano compliment of the community, then, has increased about thirty-five percent between 1930 and 1976, while the White compliment has accordingly decreased. Evidence is that the number of Whites, however, has declined in absolute as well as in relative terms from 2,500 in 1930 to about 1,050 in 1976, a decline which accords with the observations of White informants that there are now fewer Whites in San Ignacio than in pre-1950 times. The writer attributes the increase in native population since the 1950's primarily to the control of epidemic diseases such as smallpox through vaccination campaigns. Ignacianos have perhaps also benefitted to a degree from improvements in regional medical care since 1950 as well as from a greater flow of information relative to general hygiene.

The current life circumstances of Ignacianos, then, result primarily from the emergence of a "pastoral frontier" in the late 1940's. The White sector of San Ignacio, which is virtually synonymous with the ranching sector, currently controls in its own interest access to strategic resources, especially land, as well as controls the rates of exchange for labor and agricultural and forest products. Ignacianos thus constitute a highly marginal native peasantry.



Continuity and Change

Native peoples of the once Jesuit mission towns of the Beni have undergone a series of profound changes since the beginning of the mission period in 1667, and their first sustained, though carefully mediated by the Jesuits, contact with European culture. Ignacianos are descendents of Indians that may have formed part of "Tropical Forest Chiefdoms" on the eve of the mission conquest. They were then reorganized into the peculiar form taken by the mission towns. Such reorganization entailed a spatial "reduction" of dispersed groups to form the mission agglomerates, and then the installation of economic forms to feed the new towns and political forms to govern them. The cattle ranch and the cabildo are two such forms that were intended to meet those respective needs.

When the Jesuits departed Moxos in 1768, they left behind a Europeanized "Tropical-Forest" peasantry; or, to use the classification of Wagley and Harris, an Indian peasantry, or one with a "Modern Indian" type of subculture (Wagley 1968a: 123). While this subculture is characterized by a marked degree of religious syncretism and by Hispanic structural forms such as the cabildo, the native language and many aboriginal beliefs have been retained. It is such a subculture that has survived the economic whims and caprices of the nineteenth century, including the Rubber Boom, and that

exists substantially intact in San Ignacio today. Indeed, it is a thesis of this work that the socio-cultural disintegration of the Modern Indian culture of San Ignacio did not begin until about 1950, spurred primarily by the commercialization of beef cattle.

The current dispersion of Ignacianos over at least twenty-eight named settlements, including San Ignacio, a post-1950 phenomenon, in some ways recalls an aboriginal settlement pattern reported by the early Jesuits. The average population size of seven "important settlements" administratively dependent on San Ignacio and listed by the 1976 Census is 124 (Bolivia 1978b: 1). The average population size of the same category for the department, however, is 190 (N=55) (Bolivia 1978b: 1-3). Turning to early Jesuit explorations of the region, Father Castillo reports the average population size of settlements of the Moxos proper to be between sixty and eighty persons (Métraux 1942: 54), but Father Marbán reports Cayuvava villages of 2,000 people (Denevan 1966: 58). William Denevan, who notes the apparently considerable variation in village size over the area, concludes that most villages had 100 people or less (Denevan 1966: 58).

The present dispersion strikes at the heart of the traditional Modern Indian social structure. Intense public and private ritual have always been associated with that traditional social structure and the ritual called for

periodic assemblage. This required frequent interaction of Ignacianos in San Ignacio. The sacrifices which such interaction now requires, however, tend to deter it. Participation in the Cabildo, for example, practically requires that one reside in San Ignacio, where the price of meat is dear and lands for making gardens are not always available. And it is virtually impossible to commute from any distance, carrying one's food supply, in order to attend Cabildo meetings. So it is likewise for the numerous other groups in which Ignacianos have traditionally participated, but now often choose to ignore. While it is true that the cabildo and certain other of the traditional structural forms have emerged in some of the outlying settlements, fewer structures are found there than in San Ignacio and there is often not the requisite personnel to fill all of the traditional positions of those structures that do exist. Important too, the priest and church, critical to the functioning of traditional Ignaciano society, are found only in San Ignacio.

Dispersion has also created a problem in the area of family relations. Traditional wedding celebrations, for example, lasted a week and involved intense interaction between members of both families, who liberally extended mutual invitations to food and chicha. Indeed, it was only through the ritual drinking of chicha that a wide network of cross-family bonds was validated. Such large gatherings, involving many members of each family, are now rare, for family members

are simply too dispersed to be able to commit themselves to such ceremonies.

Since 1950, commercialization, agrarian reform, incipient highway construction, regularized air traffic, and rural schools have all contributed at least to a marginal "opening" of the Beni region after centuries of isolation from the political, economic, and intellectual mainstreams of Bolivian national life. For Ignacianos this has meant a cultural trend away from a sacred community and toward a secular one. The trend is especially noteworthy among younger Ignacianos, who are abandoning traditional customs for White ones at an alarming rate. Many of these younger people are ashamed of their Indian heritage and ashamed of their native language, even refusing to speak it. Aspirational patterns and schemes of values are definitely changing among younger Ignacianos. They refuse to take part in Cabildo affairs and to accept the traditional offices. Many now view agriculture as a distasteful and exhausting pursuit with few rewards, and instead seek a cattle shares arrangement with a local rancher, or even employment on one of the ranches. But younger people tend also to focus on such jobs as driver, equipment operator, or motor mechanic with the local division of the federal highway department. And a few seek service jobs in Trinidad, or work on one of the cargo vessels that ply the Mamoré. Young Ignacianos strongly desire consumer goods such as stylish clothes, phonographs, and wrist watches,

and often make great sacrifices to obtain them. These differential schemes of values and aspirational patterns often set younger Ignacianos against older ones and serve to create a generation gap fraught with tensions. Younger Ignacianos are more oriented toward the future and toward the White world, while older people lament the passing of tradition and frequently see in that passing an explanation of the current ills of Ignacianos.

### The Future

Barring some dramatic and unforeseen change in the course of events of the past thirty years in the Beni, the future for Ignacianos and other peasants of the region is bleak. Local markets for agricultural products are extremely limited, and neither the land-tenure structure nor the condition of high dispersion with no viable communication infrastructure encourages the production of surpluses. Non-agricultural opportunities in the region are extremely limited: the labor requirements of ranching are small and urban centers such as Trinidad have no industry that could absorb an influx from the countryside. The single penetration road from the highlands, unserviceable during much of the year due to flooding and heavy rains, is in general poorly maintained and thus totally unfit for any kind of regularized land traffic. Aside from geographic and economic barriers to

travel between highlands and lowlands, the cultural barrier is sufficient to daunt many lowlanders from seeking their fortunes in highland cities or successfully adapting to life once there. Ignacianos, then, are confronted with few options for making a living, none of which is viable in any absolute sense and any one of which is only marginally more viable than the others. The situation seems to be especially painful for many of the younger people because of their aspirational patterns. It also seems to explain the geographic and occupational mobility of many Ignacianos, who are forever casting about in search of improved fortunes.

The writer sees little hope, either at the regional or national level, for the emergence of measures to improve the plight of Ignacianos and other lowland Bolivian peasant groups in the foreseeable future. Long-standing regional attitudes of Whites vis-à-vis the camba as well as the formidable economic and political power wielded by the former over the latter militate overwhelmingly against changes in the status quo. Policies that favor expansion of the ranching sector and at least implicitly ignore the consequences of that expansion for the peasant sector, however, must share in the blame for the now desperate plight of the Beni peasant. Such policies include foreign assistance loans to the ranching sector as well as military and other forms of aid to economically and politically repressive regimes such as that of General Hugo Banzer. In this regard, the writer

concludes with the warning delivered by Ronald James Clark in his study of land tenure and labor relations in the lowland cattle regions conducted for the Bolivian Agricultural Credit Bank during 1969 and 1970. Says Clark:

The implications of the development policy currently followed in the lowland cattle-raising regions are too important to be ignored. This importance derives from the fact that a more effective application of Bolivia's current agrarian legislation, in combination with a policy of protecting the customary rights of Indian tribes, could go a long way towards solving the problems currently encountered in the regions. In the absence of a public will to shoulder this responsibility, international agencies should review their loan policies more carefully in order to try to foresee the effects of their programs on the local tenure structure in recipient countries. (Clark 1974: 37-38)

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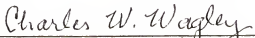
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